

**CHILD REARING AND  
PSYCHO-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**







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*MOTI LAL LIDHOO*

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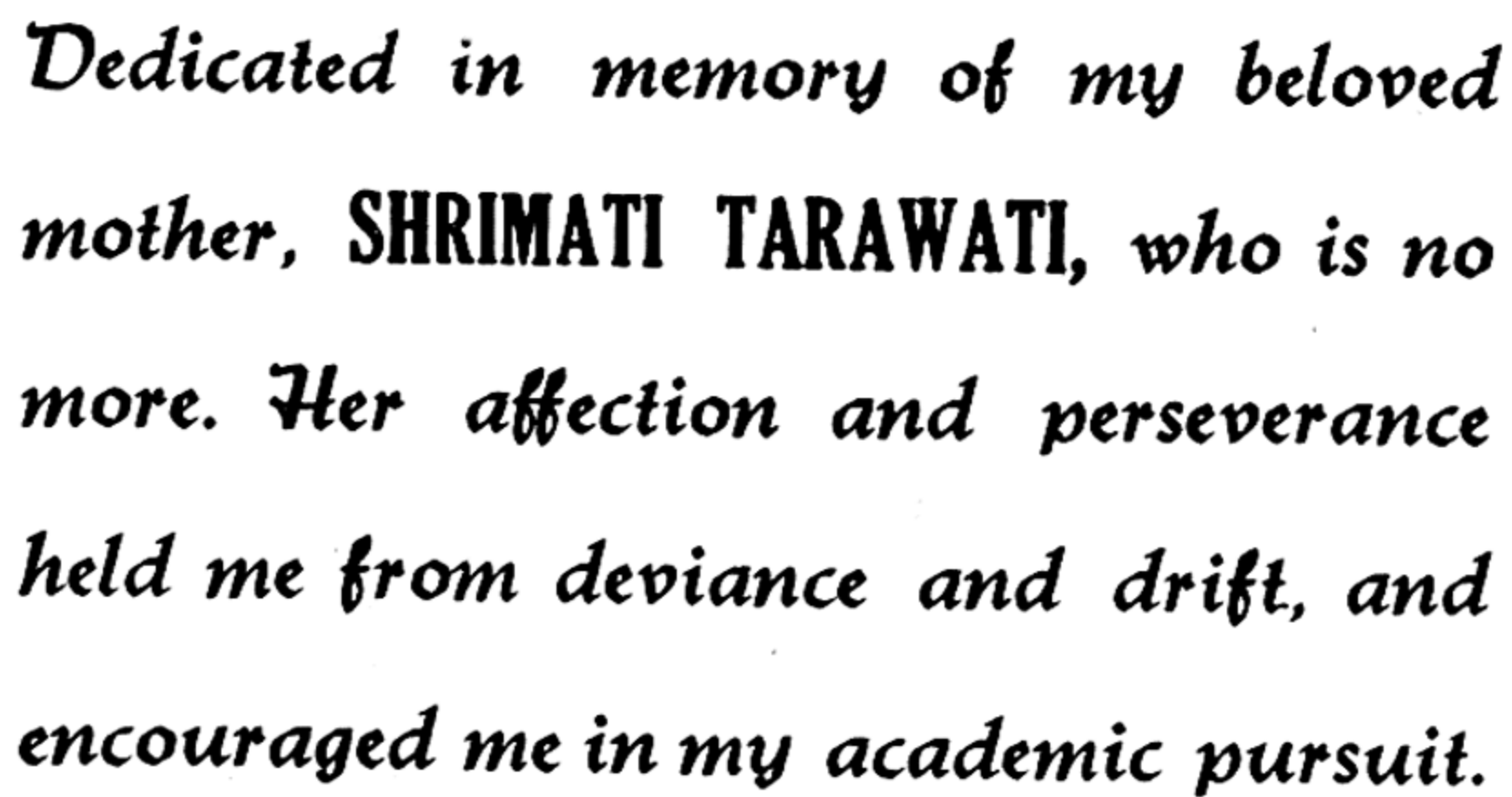
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*Dedicated in memory of my beloved  
mother, **SHRIMATI TARAWATI**, who is no  
more. Her affection and perseverance  
held me from deviance and drift, and  
encouraged me in my academic pursuit.*



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## FOREWORD

The Valley of Kashmir known all over the world for its scenic beauty and salubrious climate, is the home of a section of the ancient Indo-Aryan race who settled there centuries ago. Many more immigrants from adjoining regions also settled therein at different points of time. Hence we find at the present moment various communities living there with their distinct rituals, customs and social set-up.

Writers on Kashmir's socio-economic history have, however, touched briefly, if at all, the social and economic condition of the tribals and backward communities of the Valley. They have been living in dire poverty and in the most unhygienic conditions, isolated from the rest of the people whose contacts with them are brief and scarce.

Dr. Lidhoo is to be thanked for having undertaken the arduous task of conducting a comprehensive survey of the history, social customs and living conditions of four backward tribes of the Valley—fishermen settled on the banks of the Dal and the river Jhelum; the Gujjars permanently settled at several places on the higher reaches of the Valley and those who still lead their nomadic life; the Kuli faqirs settled near Baramulla; and the Khokhas and Bombas of the Jhelum Valley near Buniyar.

The Governments of India and the J & K State awakened early to the need of helping them in improving their lot. In the several Five-Year Plans of India funds were allotted for this purpose and the State Government

prepared various schemes for the improvement of the living conditions of these people, for encouraging their children to attend schools and for providing them with medical facilities.

What has been the result of these schemes? Has the target set up at the beginning of the plans been in anyway achieved? With the experience gained during the implementation of the several programmes, have any modifications or additions been made therein?

All these and other relevant questions find an answer in Dr. Lidhoo's valuable book "Kashmir Tribals"—a survey of the socio-economic condition of the four backward communities mentioned above. Dr. Lidhoo's survey conducted on scientific lines with the help of his students and research assistants, gives for the first time the results of the impact of the various welfare schemes on the life of these four communities. It is an eye-opener. Not with standing the pumping in of huge funds into these schemes by both the central and State Governments, the results achieved have been extremely poor. There has been no advance on any front—education of children or adults, child care, family planning, etc. There is no noticeable change in their food habits, clothing and shelter. It appears time has stood still with these communities from the day they came to and settled in Kashmir.

Dr. Lidhoo is to be congratulated on his very informative study conducted with zeal and devotion, and for the good of these tribals. Maybe, his' finding would not be to the liking of certain vested interests. But for those who have the good of the state and the poor tribals at heart, his book will prove a boon. His suggestions for the better implementation of the welfare programmes will I am sure, go a long way to achieve the goal set up by

the Planning Commissions at the centre and the state. I wish his book is read in depth and his constructive suggestions are acted upon by the officers and staff responsible for the implementation of the various programmes chalked out for the welfare of these tribals.

Srinagar  
6-11-1987

*P. N. K. Bamzai*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

While working on this project I got full co-operation from many friends, professional colleagues and students. The words with which I express my gratitude may not project the volume of respect and regard I have for them. I also record my thanks to Mr. A. K. Sapru, Mahmood Ahmad and Iqbal, who helped in compiling and editing the manuscript. My thanks also go to those tribal families who offered their warm and unstinted help to me in compiling the data.

After my mother, to whom this work is dedicated, I acknowledge the intellectual sagacity of and moral boosting from my daughter Minakashi.

*Moti Lal Lidhoo*



## P R E F A C E

The Kashmir Valley is surrounded by a chain of mountains rising from the plains in the South to high altitude peaks in the North. Its physical features like rugged mountains punctuated with lush green forests, full of natural fragrance, emanating from wild flowers, the deodars, cypress and birch trees add to the beauty of this picturesque vale. Besides the sky-kissing mountains, the Valley abounds in gushing waters which foment into small rivulets, streams and converge into translucent lakes at different places.

As for the location of the Valley, it is squarely nestled among the Himalayas at an average height of 5,400 feet from the sea level. In the North East and West, the Valley is guarded by a range of mountains, and in the South it is cut off from the Punjab by the rocky barriers 50 to 75 miles in width. These mountains, which encapsule the Valley, are varried in form. On the Northern side are the mountains, which are broken into white-crested waves hastening away towards the Nanga Parbat, which is 26,182 feet high. In the East, the Valley has the lofty Harmukh Peak at a height of 16,903 feet. This range of mountains guards the Sindh Valley. On the Southern side is the sacred peak Mahadev which overlooks the city of Srinagar.

The Kashmir region  $33^{\circ} 22' - 34^{\circ} 45' \text{ N}$  and  $72^{\circ} 53' - 75^{\circ} 42' \text{ E}$ )\*, occupies a sensitive place in India as the borders of the Valley extend to Afghanistan in the North West,

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★ Figures drawn from :-

Bates, C. F. *A Gazetteer of Kashmir.*

New Delhi : Light and Life Publishers 1980



Pakistan in the West and China and Tibet in the North East. The Valley of Ab-i-Punjab of Afghanistan separates India from the USSR.

The Kashmir region covers an area of 2, 22, 900 km, out of which an area of 83, 807 km and 41, 500 km are under the occupation of Pakistan and China respectively. The Valley was in the past an important centre of trade and cultural interaction between India and Central Asia. The famous routes which linked the Valley with the outside world used to be from the Karakoram Pass (18, 286 ft.), in Ladakh, Burzil Pass (13, 773 ft.), in Gilgit, and Babusar Peak, (13, 687 ft.), in Chilas. These routes linked Kashmir with these regions through the Zojila Pass 11300 ft. The North Western region comprises more massive mountains, and it is said that within a radius of 112 km of Gilgit Town, there are about 21 peaks (over 19, 680 ft.). The North Eastern portion of Ladakh has an average elevation of over 19,680 ft. On the Karakoram range K<sub>2</sub> (28, 244 ft.) is the second highest peak of the world.

The Valley itself is an oval 'dun' of Tectonic origin, and on a relief map, it looks like a white foot-print set in a mass of black mountains. The basin-shaped Valley is surrounded by the great Himalayas and the Pirpanjal, with as many as twelve passes leading to different routes. These include the Banihal (11000 ft.), Zojila, Deosai (12349 ft.), Burzil, Kamiri, Babusar, Janod, Kapan, Tithwal, Hajipir, Baramulla and Pirpanjal (12, 000 ft.) passes.

The geographers, geologists and mystic saints, all have been intrigued, as regards the origin and history of the Valley. The geologists believe that the Valley was a vast mountain lake called Satisar, and a volcanic miracle took place in shaping the original lake and causing its subsequent desiccation. This version is in agreement with fossils of

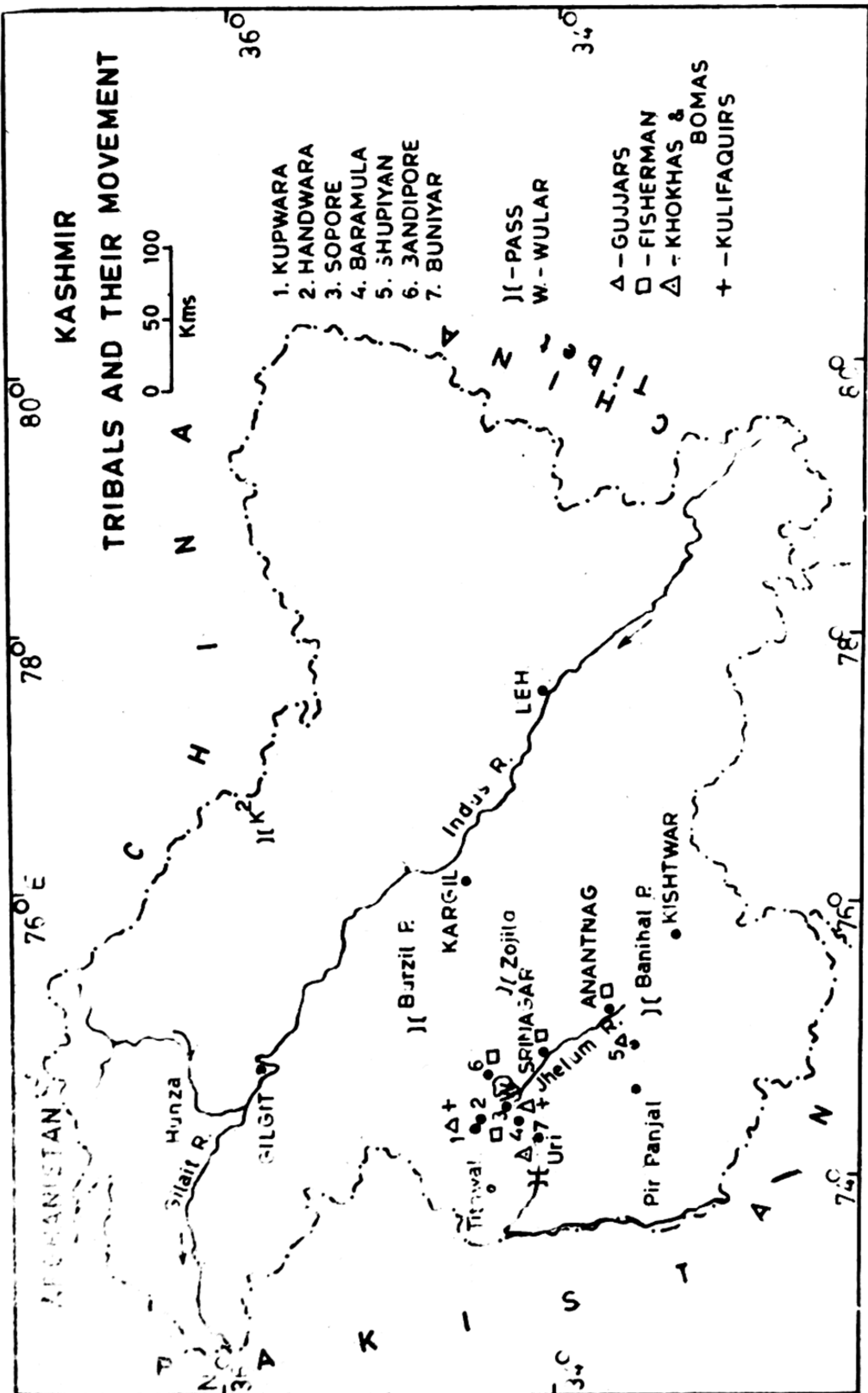
oysters found at a height of 15,000 feet above the sea level. These fossils contain remains of the freshwater fish, and black shells.

On the other hand, mystic legends trace the history of the Valley to a vast lake which was drained by Kashap Rishi and named after him as Kashap-Pur or Kashap Mar. It is now pronounced Kashmir, and in the local dialect as *Kashir*.

When we look back to the historical monuments, which exist in physical structures, or in the form of printed material, it is observed that the Valley of Kashmir had been humming with various activities, like-political, diplomatic, commercial and religious. The writings right from Kalhana and the Chinese visitors like Hieun-Tsang and those during the Mughal period reveal that the Valley commanded an envious position in various cultural and social activities. In the midst of such interaction between various cultures, many sub-communities which visited the valley at one time or the other left an indelible image on the social and cultural ethos of the land. Some of the sub-communities got tuned to the local environ and opted to settle permanently. In this way the sub-communities like Fishermen, Gojars, Khokhas-Bombas and the Kuli-faqirs, who used to visit this Valley for different ventures, settled themselves permanently and are spread in different areas of the Valley. On the basis of historical reports, it is believed the fishermen were brought to the Valley of Kashmir from Ceylon (present day Sri Lanka). Similarly, as the readers will find in following pages Gojars, who were usual visitors to the Valley got settled in different parts in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Khokhas-Bombas have been reported to be Rajputs who used to visit the Valley as tribals. By now they are settled in district Baramulla and District Kupwara. Similarly, Kuli-faqirs visited the Valley from

North-West Frontiers and got settled in District Baramulla and District Kupwara. These tribals sneaked into the valley via Baramulla and the hilly terrains of Titwal. Readers will find a comprehensive overview of the origin, history and background, culture and social life besides, the child-rearing-practices of the four sub-communities, discussed in the present volume.

*Moti Lal Lidhoo*



# KASHMIR

## TRIBALS AND THEIR MOVEMENT

0 50 100  
Kms

- 1. KUPWARA
- 2. HANDWARA
- 3. SOPORE
- 4. BARAMULA
- 5. SHUPIYAN
- 6. BANDIPORE
- 7. BUNIYAR

JI-PASS  
W-WULAR

- Δ - GUJJARS
- - FISHERMAN
- Δ - KHOKHAS & BOMAS
- + - KULIFAQUIRS



# Part I

## *Fishermen Families, History & Background*





## Introduction

### **HISTORY & BACKGROUND :**

Kashmir, a Valley of saints, seers and poets has all along been the source of attraction for people from different shades and persuasions all over the world. This Valley has equally been blessed by nature with magnificent trees, mighty mountains, lush-green meadows, springs and lakes. Historians, all over the world, have described the Valley as a land of nature's reflection, as regards the beauty, peace and tranquillity. To quote Lawrence (1967), "The Valley is an emerald set in pearls, a land of lakes, clear streams, green turf, magnificent trees and mighty mountains, where the air is cool and water is sweet". In spring and summer the wild and natural flowers of different shades and hues represent a breath-taking scene to the onlookers.

As far the flora and fauna of the Valley, the land for the purpose of cultivation is insufficient. Most of the Valley is covered with sky-touching mountains and gushing waters and there are only some patches of plain fields which are cultivable but the yield is very little. Although the State of Jammu and Kashmir is a part of the National mainstream so far as the economic, social and political development, the progress has not kept pace in proportion to the finances pumped into the State from time to time. As per the census reports of 1981 the total population of the State is 59, 54, 010. Of this the population of Kashmir Valley alone is 31, 35, 904. As for



the population of children within the age of 6 to 18 years it is reported to be two million of which one million twenty thousand are boys and the remaining are girls. It is unfortunate that out of two million children within the age group of 6-18 years only half the number is enrolled in schools at various grade levels. Though the total literacy statistics of the State is 26.17% the literacy statistics among female is 15.82%. This statistics is boosted by the literacy figures of urban population. As a matter of fact the literacy statistics of rural Kashmir, particularly the villages which are nearer to the border areas, is insignificant. Similarly literacy statistics of tribal communities like Gojars, Boatmen and semi-skilled professionals is equally disappointing.

Because of the poor literacy statistics, it is obvious that the proportion of educated people in the State of Jammu and Kashmir is far less than the proportion of educated people in other parts of the country. Besides, poor statistics in education, as mentioned above, the land holdings of people are very little. Therefore, the gross income of an average common man is also very little as compared to the gross income of an average common man in other parts of the country. As for the vocational distribution of people in the Valley, mostly this includes agriculture, cattle rearing, labour class and the like. Besides these semi-skilled jobs, some sections of the society are engaged in manufacture of local handicrafts and such unskilled jobs which are dependant on tourist traffic. These vocations are seasonal.

Among the unskilled workers of the Valley there is a special community among Muslims who are known as 'Hanjis'. This community is mostly settled on the river-side banks; right from Khannabal, where—from river Jehlum starts its course and flows down, upto Baramulla and

beyond. The Hanjis are semi-nomadic tribals who, in search of avenues for earning, move from one river station to another. In his detailed survey titled "*Valley of Kashmir*", Lawrence (1967) has given a detailed description of Hanjis. The author states that Hanjis in Kashmir are one of the important tribals whose population in the year 1891 was estimated to be 33,870. The author states that the exact origin of this community is not exactly known, but some of the historical records affirm that one Raja Parbat Sen introduced boatmen to Kashmir from Sengla Deep (present Cylone or Sri Lanka). It is also reported that they were of the Vaisya caste and even now the Hanjis, as a section of Muslim Community are not being considered among the respectable castes. In ancient times when there were no routes of transport, the river route was the only way through which the passengers used to travel and different types of commodities were carried in big barges from one station to another. The famous travelling stations via river route were Srinagar to Bandipora and from Bandipora to Sopore and Baramulla. Because of the different types of services rendered by Hanjis, they are classified into different sub castes. This has also been reported by Lawrence. In the descending order of professional importance, the Hanjis have been classified as :—

- (a) House-Boat Hanjis: This is a special class of Hanjis who were patronised by British Travellers. The Britishers introduced the luxury type of construction of House-Boat in which they used to stay. The House-Boat is a mini-type of a house, stationed on water and can be ferried from place to place. The interior of the boat is exquisitely decorated with wood carvings, walnut furniture and other luxuries. This section of Hanjis has been enjoying a distinguished position because of their easy access to the British, the then ruling class. Because of the fact that their

clientele were only foreigners, they used to make a lot of money as compared to their counter-parts. This is the main reason that house-boat hanjis have arisen to economically comfortable position and their social status is equally better. Even now the House Boat-Hanjis enjoy a better economic and social status because of the tourist influx in the Valley from all over the world. Besides, the economic and social status of the House-Boat Hanjis, their standard, fashion and language style is pro-western than native. The ladies of this class are as envious in their looks, presentation etc. as the ladies from any superior section of the society. Their children often attend the prestigious schools founded by Britishers and their physical appearance, eye colour, facial physiognomy is in no way different than Europeans.

- (b) The second section of this community is known as 'Doonga Hanjis'. These Hanjis are mostly engaged in commercial transport i. e., they carry different types of consignments from one station to another. But, by now, when vehicular transport has spread to all parts of the State, their services are not in demand and they suffer from acute economic set-back. Their stations are specific and they usually move from one station to another while carrying various commercial consignments. The whole family contributes to the survival of each member. Due to financial set-back, this section of Hanjis is shifting from river side living to a settled life and adopt some petty avenues of income, like tea stalls, green grocers shops and labour. Besides these petty avenues, the Donga Hanjis also work as ferrymen. They carry visitors or travellers across the Dal-Lake to different parts and thus make little source of living. Their family condition is very pathetic because of the fact that there are many mouths to be fed with meagre income.

- (c) The lowest section of this community, as far the economic and social conditions are concerned, is the fishermen sub-community, which comes under the purview of the present investigation. This section of Hanjis is the poorest of all sections in the Valley. Their belongings are very few and their life style even now is that of Gypsy people. Since this section of Hanjis, from ancient years, has taken to fishing as a sole profession; therefore, their economic, social and professional conditions are far more pathetic as compared to their counterparts.

It has been mentioned that fishermen in the Valley of Kashmir form a special class among themselves, despite the fact that the country has completed six five year plans which envisaged a phased social, economic and personal growth of each and every individual. irrespective of his caste, class or race, the fishermen families have not benefitted from these programmes. While looking towards the plight of fishermen in the Valley of Kashmir, who are spread on both sides of river Jehlum from Khannabal to Baramulla, it is chaotic to note that there has not been a slight change in their economic and social conditions. It seems as if the impact of freedom and welfare programmes have not made any favourable impact on these unfortunate members of our country. On the basis of census reports of 1981, it is reported that there are about two lakh sixty thousand of fishermen families who are settled at different parts along the banks of river Jehlum. The prominent stations in the Valley, where these people are usually stationed, are Khannabal, Srinagar—particularly the area of Dal Lake, Tailbal and the Jehlum side. Besides, fishermen are also stationed at Bandipora, Sopore and Baramulla. These people do not enjoy any settled



life. Like other nomadic tribals they keep on rowing their boats through rough waters from one station to another. The mobility of these people depends on the flow of water in river Jehlum. During spring season when water level of the river is at its peak, the fishermen move downwards along with the water flow of the Jehlum and during autumn and winter season, when water level of the Jehlum is moderate and low, they keep on moving upwards along the course of the river Jehlum. This mobility is associated with the quantity of fish available at different stations and in different seasons.

**LIVING CONDITIONS :-** The professional fishermen have very poor living conditions. Usually these people have a small oval shaped boat, which is nine feet long and hardly three feet wide (as shown in Plate-1), in which they are born, they grow, marry procreate and die. This boat is a multi-purpose sheltering place. It is the fishing vessel for catching fish. Besides, it serves as kitchen, bedroom and store. Everything - log, stock and barrel is contained in this small boat. It has no ceiling except a cover of grass-matting which is inhospitably porous during winters and reflects scorching heat during summers. On the basis of observations, the investigator has found that none of the fishermen or women has an erect physical posture. This is because of cramped living conditions in the midst of which these people keep on jostling. Their belongings are very few as for the kitchen wares, dress, beddings and other house-hold articles are concerned. As far the kitchen-ware, mostly earthen pots are in use instead of copper, steel or any other metal. Each couple has four to five living children, besides parents. No logic can explain how these members stretch themselves for a night-rest and that too without any privacy. The present investigator contacted an old lady for explaining the reasons of many children

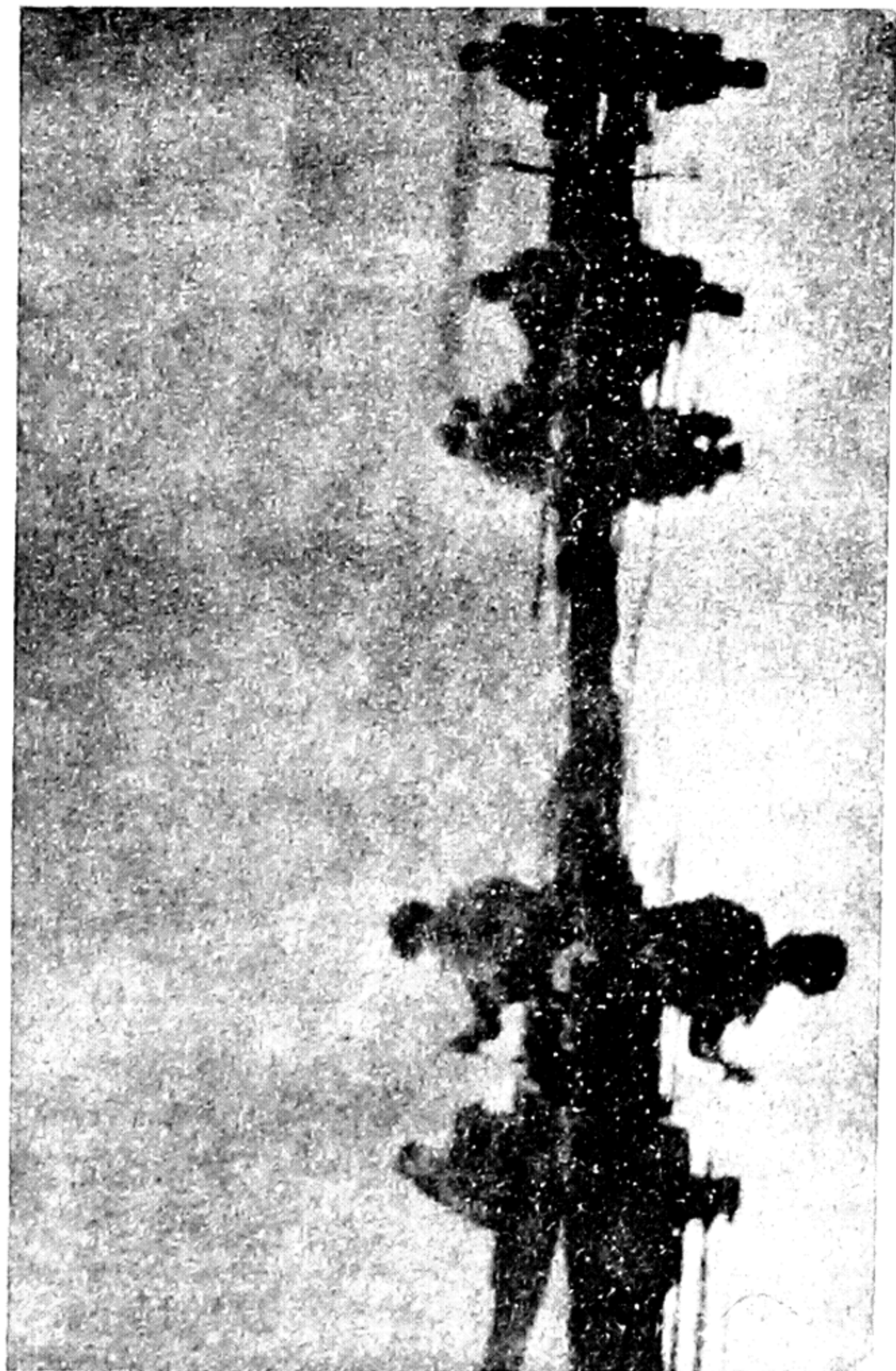


Plate I—  
Fisherman Family in Dal Lake



they bear. Without any reservations the lady blurted out that physical proximity, in the absence of adequate accommodation is perhaps one of the major factors. The statement is equally borne by Lawrence (1967)\* who states, "If they are lax in morality it is little to be wondered at, as their cramped dwelling precludes decent privacy".

**OCCUPATION:-** As for the occupation of fishermen, under the present investigation, they do not engage themselves in any casual or part-time assignment except fishing. The *modus operandi* of the fishing is that the fishermen in Dal-lake, where water is almost stagnant, ferry their boats early in the morning, by the side of Nishat, Shalimar and Hazratbal Shrine. The main equipment with these fishermen for catching fish is a nylon net woven in such a way that it can be spread over an area of three to four meters and the net gets shrunk, with the weight of iron balls attached to its border, when thrown into the water. In this way all the fish in the area of three to four meters get entrapped into the net. The quantity of fish trapped in a single throw of net depends on the flow of water and availability of fish. However, the fish catching technique of the fishermen in the District of Baramulla ( Sopore and Bandipora ) is different. This is due to the fact that these fishermen have to struggle against the flowing water of the Jehlum and the Wullar Lake. Therefore, their nets are wider, heavier and supplemented with a bunch of tackles attached to a small rod. In this way the yield of fishermen in Sopore, Bandipora and Baramulla is far greater than the quantity of fish being collected by fishermen of Dal-Lake. The type of fish available in Dal-Lake is mostly of Mirror Carp type whereas the fish available in river Jehlum is Schizethorax. Because of the catchment area which is richer for the fishermen who depend on river Jehlum, the fishermen of Dal-Lake and Tailbal are comparatively poor due to their poor resources.



**DRESS :-** The sources of modern communication, to which the fishermen do not have any access, have not made any impact on the living conditions of these people. As for the dress, the male folk usually wear a conventional type of shirt and trouser which is basically a dress among muslims. Since these men-folk live a life which is exposed to the hazards of heat and cold, they also wear a long loose *Kashmiri* dress known as '*Pheren*'. These people do not have any substitute change till one pair of dress is worn out threadbare. Some of them are still in use of a conventional cap which is a local product and is associated with the dress of this community. As for women-folk, they are also devoid of any modern influence on their dress. Both-married ladies and young girls-wear shirt and trouser and cover it with a long loose dress (*Pheren*) designed for ladies. The head dress of fisherwomen is typically unique and totally different from other sections of the Muslim Community. Married women usually wear a round cap on their heads which is covered with a sheet of white or printed cloth. The cloth and the cap remain stitched with the help of pins. The use of sari or suit is absolutely unknown to women of Hanjis. Their young girls also wear a conventional type of shirt and a trouser and cover their heads with a piece of cloth. Ladies usually wear silver jewellery designed for arms and ears. Besides, all members irrespective of sex and age wear different amulets in order to evade evil spirits. Because economic stringency and lack of accommodation they are not able to have enough bedding. Usually a mat, woven of thatch, rough and coarse, is laid on wooden floor, on which the whole family with a coarse and stinky cover-cloth rests for night. Usually these clothes are stained with the faeces of young children as the fisherwomen do not cultivate toilet training habits among children.

**FOOD AND DRINKS :-** Fishermen, all along the bank of the river Jenlum from Khannabal to Baramulla, have a unique routine of their own because of the profession which sustains them. Their daily food consists of boiled rice and some boiled vegetables. As for beverages these people are badly given to the use of tea which has special blend and is prepared with salt and milk. It is not an exaggeration that these people sustain themselves on tea and locally baked bread than on cereals. Another interesting thing among the fishermen is use of snuff and smoke. Though snuff is getting out of fashion but smoking is very common among all the members of the family i. e. men, women and children. They do not smoke cigarettes or pipe but they are given to use of '*Hukka*' in which moisted tobacco powder is put in an earthen cap and is lit with some charcoals and the smoke is inhaled through a pipe connected with a small water-pot.

**SOCIAL CUSTOMS :-** In a normal common family of Muslims in Kashmir if one has to pass a remark as a slang the customs of fishermen are attached with it. It is, therefore, very clear that the customs and taboos of fishermen are quite conventional and unchiseled. Firstly there is a remarkable difference in the role of men and women. Among fishermen the women play usually the male role i. e. women dominates the household, she controls the family purse and conducts the family and outside business. The male head of the family is instrumental only in procreation and collecting fish all along the day. Since their social standards, in their own eyes and in the eyes of other members of the society are considered at a very low ebb, there are no signs of decency in their conversation and normal family life. It is immaterial whether husband scolds or uses abusive language against his spouse or women does it against her husband. No reservations are

maintained in the presence of children, as for the rough and illmannerly behaviour.

**MARRIAGE :-** Marriage among fishermen is primarily a social and economic need rather than the biological one. It is in this sense that marriages are solemnised at a very young age and usually within the known relations. Usually girls are married around the age of 12 and 13 years and the grooms around 16 to 18 years. Some times a bride is older to the groom which is not a usual practice among other Muslim communities of the Valley. Since marriages are solemnised within the relations, the boys and girls are familiarly known to each other even before marriage. In this sense it may be considered as an advantage that some sort of social rapport exists between boys and girls before they are married. One more interesting observation about fishermen is that there has never been the intrusion of dowry-bug in their marriages. The usual custom is the groom's family has to present some conventional dresses and a few pieces of jewellery (silver or gold), for the bride and latest addition to this convention is that some cash is also deposited by the groom's family against the name of the bride. Marriage is solemnised in a very simple manner. A few of the close relations of the groom accompany him to the bride's family where the normal religious ceremony (*Nikah*) is performed. After the first visit of the girl to her groom's place, she is immediately taken back by parents and may return to inlaws after a couple of years, till she has grown-up. Children are usually borne by these girls when they are around fifteen to sixteen years of age. In this way, usually a girl bears five to six children by the time she has attained the age of 25 years. Delivery usually takes place in a conventional manner. No mid-wives or hospital assistance is sought. Infantile mortality is comparatively higher among fishermen as

compared to other sections of the society. Even death of children due to drowning or suffocation is a usual routine in the families of fishermen. As followers of Islam, and devoid of any social emancipation, these people do not entertain the programme of family planning, except under such circumstances where the health of the woman is endangered due to child bearing.

Though divorce is a permitted practice among Muslims all over the world yet there are some limitations for the female partner due to which she can not initiate a proposal for divorce. This rule is strictly adhered to by the fisher-women. As there is no pardah system among the fishermen families the investigator had a free access to young and old ladies with whom the limitations of divorce were discussed. Even otherwise the rate of divorce among fishermen is very insignificant because of social and economic reasons. In case a male member wants to divorce his wife he has to pay a penalty of five to six thousand rupees for the rehabilitation of woman. On the basis of person to person interview with the fishermen the investigator observed that there was a general feeling among married men that they can not afford to divorce their women because of stringent economic conditions.

**CHILD REARING PRACTICES:-** Child rearing practice of the fishermen is the central theme of the present study and intensive efforts have been made to watch the child rearing behaviour of these families. As mention has been made that a lady bears her first child when she is 15 to 16 years of age and even at the time of delivery there is absolutely no privacy as if it is just a routine matter. The women during pregnancy is never under the consultation of a gynecologist, nor do they care for treatment in the post - delivery period. At the time of delivery a senior lady of the family acting as a midwife helps the



lady who is to deliver. After that the new born infant is just given a casual bath and muffled in the filthy rags. The mother, who is an unfortunate creature, can not afford to stay in bed even for a couple of days nor does she expect any prescribed food or medicine. In this way child bearing is just a routine type of a behaviour for women. The baby is breast-fed for a couple of days till the mother resumes her outdoor jobs for marketting fish. It is sheer tragic that under duress and pressure even in the post-delivery period the fisherwomen are not permitted to heave a sigh of relief nor even a casual medical care or lookafter. After the mother resumes outdoor assignment, the new born infant is left to the care of grandmother or a senior sibling. In this way the infant is not put to a consistent affectionate and warm treatment, as is desirable for the emotional and social development of a child. Since the job of mother is arduous and unscheduled, she can not make herself available to the child till sun-set. So the child is marooned to the care of nature or any senior sibling. Usually the children, after delivery, are introduced to bottle feeding, which is a still worst calamity for the nutrition and health of a child. There is absolutely no awakening in the fishermen families for maintaining health conditions and hygienic care of the young child. The bottles used for feeding the child are never sterilised. At times the left-over milk is also fed to the baby even when the nipple might have been soiled with insects, flies and dirt.

Since the mother has no time to extend her warmth and body contact through breast or caresses, the child grows just like a wild creature, devoid of basic emotional feelings and warmth. The helpless and pathetic condition of young infants without proper maternal care has been beautifully mentioned by (Spitz, 1945). The author states that maternal deprivation among children generates a sense

of insecurity and fear. Besides, the mortality rate of children, who are deprived of maternal love and affection, is higher as compared to those who have normal maternal care. Since fisherwomen themselves have no concept of hygiene and toilet habits, the new born children are not groomed to develop habits of toilet training. It is not a surprise that usually the children of these families are seen stinking with the odour of urine and excreta. Young children usually soil their beds or the places where they have been put to sleep and mothers do not take any serious notice of such lapses. Therefore, this becomes a permanent feature with the young children that they do not exercise any control on their bowels. Even after the infancy stage, young children at the age of five and onwards, ease their bowels just in open and even within the premises of their living area. The concept like weaning, toilet training and habit formation is literally unheard of among the fishermen families. The social development of young boys and girls is not by any design—it is only haphazard, sometimes strictly on authoritarian and often on permissive basis. Instead of shaping the behaviour of a young child with civilized manners and decency, parents arrogantly induct young children to filthy language, smoking and ill manners. The young boys are usually seen half naked without any concern towards their nakedness or exposed parts of their body. Even sometimes it is not uncommon to see young girls dressed in a single shirt without any cover to their nudeness. Not only that, these young girls also use fowl language and behave in filthy manners. The development of consciousness among boys and girls as regards the difference in their sexes is a normal course of growth and development. Because both boys and girls, due to cramped living conditions, grow with each other in a physical proximity. One more important observation among the girls of this community (fishermen) is that they are not shy or

reserved in their behaviour towards boys. This type of permissive development among girls is also a natural phenomena of this community. Even adolescence as an age is not in any way a serious concern, as regards the physical and emotional development of boys and girls. This is also because of the fact that both boys and girls grow together and watch each other behaving with parents and siblings all the time. Girls are not offered any special education for maintaining any distance with boys. By the time a girl has attained the age of puberty she is married or in certain cases before the onset of puberty the girls are married.

**EDUCATION:-** Among a number of casualties, as regards the child care of fishermen families, formal schooling is the first victim. There is hardly any instance where the fishermen families have considered that their children should be registered for school. Even though the elementary schools are very much in the vicinity of their camping stations, yet these families do not consider the education of their children as an important responsibility. It is obvious when both parents are away i. e. father is out on the river side for fishing and the mother goes for marketing, the older siblings keep on loitering aimlessly and resort to such undesirable and socially degrading acts which pose a potential threat to the future of these boys and girls.

As for the play and leisure time activities are concerned, again these children are left to the mercy of their own ingenuous. Most of the time they take to activities like playing with mud, splashing filthy water and bathing in open and muddy waters for hours to end. Even resorting to bad habits like smoking, destroying public property or inflicting injury on other children is not uncommon.

# 2

## Layout of Research Design

The present study has been designed such that the child rearing conditions of fishermen families are established on the basis of interview schedule and door to door survey. Further the proposed project was designed to collect information on the psycho-social and cultural factors, which determine the development and socio-economic prosperity of the fishermen families.

Keeping in view the factors under the proposed investigation, the investigator conducted a preliminary survey of a few families settled around Dal Lake, Nala-Tel-Bal and at the banks of river Jehlum at Baramulla, Sopore and Bandipora. On the basis of the first hand information the investigator designed a blue-print for an interview schedule. For this purpose the investigator consulted developmental studies conducted by psychologists and sociologists under different socio-economic and cultural conditions. The guidelines were drawn from Hurlock (1978), Parameswaran and Bhogie (1979); besides, research designs discussed by Young (1982), Kerlinger (1978), Wilkinson and Bandarkar (1982) were taken into consideration. On the basis of the first try-out interview schedule, it was felt that areas like family, economic conditions, social conditions, religious attitude and husband-wife relations be considered for the development of a detailed interview schedule. A number of try-out schedules were developed and these were administered on a small sample of fishermen settled around Dal-Lake and the banks of river Jehlum. In this way the statements which were found redundant or invol-



ving inhibition were either dropped or re-designed. Thus the final interview schedule, comprising 61 statements covering a number of factors included in the present research, was drawn-up. Some of the statements were split into sub-clauses for collecting a detailed information. In this way the final interview schedule was developed after a number of trials and revisions. A copy of the interview schedule is given in Appendix-I.

**SAMPLING:-** It was intended that the project will be completed on fishermen, settled around Dal-Lake and the banks of river Jehlum from Khannabal to Baramulla. On the basis of the Census Reports of 1981 it was established that the total population of fishermen from Khannabal to Baramulla and Dal-Lake is about two lakhs. This includes the fishermen families who are not engaged in any other side-business or part-time activity. The attempt of investigator was to include families from Khannabal, Dal-Lake and District Baramulla, so that each section gets an adequate representation. Keeping in view the limitations of the study and the budget estimates the proposed research was confined to seventy fishermen families, selected from Khannabal, Tailbal, Dal-Lake and Baramulla. It needs mention that the families included in the present study were drawn on the basis of random sampling method. Names of the family heads were written on the small cards and representation of each family is based on the draw system. In this way the total number of families selected for the proposed study is 70, of which there are 50 families from Dal-Lake and Tailbal area, 15 from Bandipora and Sopore and 5 families from Khannabal. The small number of fishermen selected from Khannabal represent only those families whose whole time profession is fishing. Otherwise, there are many more families in the area who take to fishing as a casual and part-time activity.

**TEST ADMINISTRATION:-** The interview schedule was developed in English script and each statement was read-out in the local dialect i.e. Kashmiri. The responses were collected from the male head or the female member of the family depending on the availability of the family members. It took almost one full hour to collect information regarding one family and its related factors. The area of child development and child rearing practices was specially designed so that information could be collected from pre-natal stage to the post-natal and early childhood stage of each child. Besides, special provision was made for including statements in the area of religious education, formal education, adoption of family planning viz. vasectomy/tubectomy. Also attempts were made to collect information on the impact of mass-media, television and radio.

In this way the investigator collected detailed information of 70 families and the data is presented in the following Chapter.

# 3

## Analysis of Data :

It has been mentioned in the foregoing pages that this study is based on a randomly selected sample of 70 fishermen families representing Tailbal, Dal-Lake, Sopore and Bandipora. Fishermen from Khannabal area were not included in the final investigation. In view of the objectives established for the present research the data was collected under a number of headings which were included in the research format.

In the first analysis the investigator analysed the age composition of the fishermen couples and on the basis of collected data it has been established that the average age of the couples, included in the present study, was found to be 43.5 years. As shown in Table-I (page 20). Age at the time of marriage for male members was found to be 14.7 years, as compared to ladies whose average age at the time of marriage was found to be 13.9 years. On the basis of these observations it is established that fishermen marry at a young age. While conducting the married ladies for the proposed interview the investigator observed that because of early marriage and inadequate hygiene and health care these ladies had developed a host of health problems. The new born children also fall an easy prey to a number of infectious diseases, such as pneumonia, influenza, diarrhea and cholera. Again as for the incidence of mortality of children, it is 15% for male and 20% for female. As regards the education of children the findings have shown that out of 113 male children only 21 were attending school at various grade levels. It has

been shown in Table-II (Page 20) that out of 21 school going children 13 children were in elementary classes and one each in 10th class and 12th class. The overall percentage of male children attending school is 18.58%. Similarly the educational analysis of female children as shown in Table-III (Page 21) is equally disquieting. The number of girls attending schools is 15. None of the girls is studying in middle or higher secondary classes. This is obvious because of the fact that girls are married around the age of 13 and 14 years. The total percentage of girls attending schools is only 14.56%.

While computing the daily income of each family, the collected information which is shown in Table-IV (Page 21) has shown that the income of the family depends on the number of male hands. Each male member has the capacity to earn between 20 to 35 Rupees a day. But, this is contingent on the season and the catchment area. On an average the income of one family unit i. e. husband, wife and children is between Rs. 15/- and Rs. 25/-, per day.

It is unfortunate that the ethical and moral education of the children is not being considered as an essential feature for the development of social values and character formation. Out of 70 families, the investigator observed that only a handful of parents expressed their desire and eagerness for providing moral education to their children. But, impending difficulty of these parents is that they keep on moving from one place to another, due to which learned *Molvis* are not available to educate the young children of the fishermen.

Another dimension related to use of nicotine has shown that both male and female members of fishermen families are given to smoking. Besides smoking they are used to tobacco powder. There is no reservation between the couples while making the use of smoke or snuff.

**TABLE - I**  
**Table showing age distribution of 70 fishermen couples :**

S. No :	Age - group :	Male :	Female :
1	80 - 89	5	...
2	70 - 79	11	...
3	60 - 69	7	8
4	50 - 59	11	10
5	40 - 49	23	15
6	30 - 39	11	17
7	20 - 29	2	14
8	10 - 19	...	6
	Mean	35.5	35.5
	N	70	70

**TABLE - II**

**Table showing percentage of boys attending schools at various grade levels :**

S. No :	Grade :	No of boys attending schools :	Percentage of boys attending schools :
1	Elementary	13	11.50
2	Middle	6	5.30
3	High	1	0.88
4	Higher Secondary	1	0.88
	N	21	

Total No. of boys	...	113
No. of boys attending schools at various grade - levels	...	21
Percentage of boys attending schools	...	18.58%



TABLE - III

Table showing percentage of girls attending schools at various grade levels :

S. No :	Grade :	No. of girls attending schools :	Percentage of girls attending schools :
1	Elementary	15	14.56
2	Middle	...	...
3	High	...	...
4	Higher Secondary	...	...
N		15	...
Total No. of girls		...	103
No. of girls attending schools at various grade - levels		...	15
Per-centage of girls attending schools		...	14.56%

TABLE - IV

Table showing daily average income of seventy fishermen families selected from Dal-Lake, Sopore, Baramulla, Khananbal and Tailbal.

Average range of income per-day (in Rupees)	Total No. of families in the income group :	Area-wise break-up :				
		Dal-Lake :	Tailbal :	Bandi-pora :	Sopore :	Khanna-bal :
10 - 14	5	2	...	...	...	4
15 - 19	3	2	...	...	...	1
20 - 24	30	16	14	...	...	...
25 - 29	15	...	15	...	...	...
30 - 34	4	...	1	2	1	...
35 - 39	4	...	...	1	3	...
40 - 44	6	...	...	2	4	...
45 - 49	2	...	...	...	2	...
N	70	20	30	5	10	5

As for the utilization of facilities provided by the Govt. under the 20 point programme, the fishermen families have not benefited themselves from these facilities. Again out of the total sample (70 families) none has taken any kind of loan from any Govt. or banking agency; with the result these people are toiling day and night and even then have not been able to elevate their economic and social position.

As for the facility of music and entertainment, the fishermen families are still living in a conventional pattern with hardly any radio, T. V. or musical gadgets. Mostly locally fabricated transistors within the price range of Rs. 150/- and Rs. 200/-, are the sole source of entertainment of these families. There were only three families out of seventy which were having T.V. facilities. However, most of the programmes are not within the comprehension of the pre-dominantly illiterate fishermen families. There is only one programme i. e. music in the local dialect which these people relish.

The review of information collected under various headings from mundane routine life to education of children, the fishermen families are shockingly grinding under the mill of poverty, day-in and day-out; with no security against natural and unforeseen tragedies or calamities, no settled future for their children. The fishermen families have not been touched by the modern technology, health-care and insurance against insecurity. This is shown through the monthly income of each family given as under :—

TABLE - V

**Table showing average monthly income of the seventy fishermen families :**

S. No :	Income group :	Number of families :
1	300 - 600	9
2	601 - 900	49
3	901 - 1200	6
4	1201 - 1500	6
N		70



# 4

## Discussion and Interpretation of Results

Though the condition of children in all the developing countries has attracted the attention of the world bodies like UNICEF and some other voluntary organizations, which include S. O. S., yet there has not been any pronounced change as regards the improvement in the normal development of children and the protection of their basic rights. In India alone, it is reported—Mamoria (1981)—that there are ten million children in the age group of 6 to 18 years who are unlettered and are employed in such organizations where the working conditions are chaotic and soul sickening. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Council of Child Development have initiated various programmes which are intended to improve the living conditions of children living in slums and hutments. Though the death rate of children has declined considerably, yet the population of children is on an alarming increase and the developmental programmes of the Government have failed to include all children who need help and protection. This has also been supported by Munby (1981) who states, "Too frequently an accelerated demographic increase adds its own difficulties to the problems of development; the size of the population increases more rapidly than available resources, and things are found to have reached apparently an impasse".

In the same vein the late President, V. V. Giri cautioned the Nation in 1970 regarding the accelerated growth of population vis-a-vis the declining death rate and insufficient resources.

Another dimension, unique to the Indian conditions, which adds to the problem of child care and child development is the largest young population which keeps on increasing beyond proportions. It has been reported by Memoria ( 1981 ) that the largest chunk of Indian population is within the age group of 14 to 15 (42.1%), whereas the percentage of old people, within the age group of 60 has shrunk to 5.2%.

Keeping in view the accelerated growth of young population accompanied by declining death rate, the resources of the Government are not sufficient so as to cater for teeming millions who loiter on pavements and around the industrial settlements. The problem of children in the Valley of Kashmir is equally disappointing as for the statistics of wayward children is concerned. The Department of Social Welfare of J & K has reported that there are about 20 thousand children in a total population of 59,54,010, who need protection, food and care. These children are mostly from urban and semi-urban areas and quite a good fraction of these wayward children come from the backward sections of our society. The State of Jammu and Kashmir has not organised Children's Homes and Child Welfare Centres in proportion to the number of children who need such an assistance. For instance, in the Valley of Kashmir, where the number of orphan and homeless children is about twenty thousand, there are hardly two institutions which cater to the needs of children who are destitute. One of the institutions which caters to the needs of destitute girls is situated in Miskeen Bagh, Khanyar, Srinagar. Another home for destitute children, sponsored by Government, is situated at Shalimar, Srinagar. Since the intake capacity of these two institutions is very limited, most of the wayward children are seen loitering around the bus terminals, industrial settlements and busy shopping centres. A cursory survey of such destitute children reveals

that most of them come from families whose parents have not been able to offer a cohesive and affectionate family atmosphere. These children include Gujar boys, children of sweepers and the children who are very poor.

In view of the general conditions of poor children in the Valley, the investigator had, by intention, considered to study the child development problems of canal boat families; because of the basic facts that the children of these families are by and large deprived of the essential care and social education. The investigator made an intensive survey of 70 fishermen families settled in various parts of the Valley. The basic objectives of the survey were confined to the following areas :-

1. Emotional cohesiveness of the couples;
2. Attitude towards scientific methods of child rearing and child care;
3. Resistance towards formal education of children;
4. Perception of parents towards children and perception of children towards parents;
5. Attitude towards family planning and modern medical facilities.

**1. Emotional cohesiveness of the couples :**

In the present investigation emotional cohesiveness of the couples has been defined as general agreement of husband and wife in relation to their personal and day to day problems without an occasional parading of emotions. Among fishermen families an average family consists of parents within the age range of 40 to 55 years and a number of children ranging from 4 to 5 within the age range of 5 to 16 years. The total family of about 6 members is usually settled in one small boat. The father is usually out of home and remains busy in and around such sites where he is able to catch fish. The routine of

mother is to collect the fish and leave the house at early hours and return back in afternoon after selling the fish. Under these circumstances a young fondling is deprived of the love and affection, particularly from mother. Consequently these fondlings, in various developmental stages; exhibit a pronounced degree of aggression towards objects and people around. Studies conducted by Bossard and Boll (1966) and Garrison (1959) have also revealed that young children who are deprived of parental affection develop an emotionally disturbed behaviour and are often seen demonstrating aggression towards their siblings and peers. There are similar reports from Bowlby (1958) in which the author states that people (parents) who are of immediate concern to a young child make a lasting impact on his emotional and social development. In this way the author further states that a child; deprived of parental contact and affection grows into an adolescent or an adult, who is often than not bullying, prone to lid-off his emotions without rhyme and reason. In the present investigation the investigator covered about 200 children from both sexes and in the age range of 6 to 15 years. The observed behaviour of these children has revealed that their behaviour is usually impulsive rather than governed by reason. They act and behave inconsistently, sometimes in an overt and aggressive form. Since these children are most of the time left to themselves in all sorts of filthy and undesirable activities, they become hardened miscreants and socially undesirable elements. Even for the normal emotional development the physical presence of parents as well as their concerted efforts are the essence of normal child development behaviour. But, it is unfortunate that the parents of these fishermen children are usually away and when they join them, they demonstrate inconsistent and indiscreet behaviour towards them. Keeping in view the concept of authoritarian behaviour, permissive behaviour and behaviour that is cooperative and consistent, the fishermen families



can not be classified under any of these behavioural patterns because of their own upbringing (as young children) neither they are permissive nor authoritarian. They indiscreetly shower words of affection to their children and with the same manner scold them in an abusive and filthy manner. Studies on child rearing practices have also shown that actions of parents, their attitudes, their values, actions and beliefs make a lasting impact on the interpersonal behaviour of children. This is precisely true about the interaction of fishermen families and their children, where a parent prompts a young child to use foul language or physically assault the other parent. In this way the children get used to snobbery and indecency. It is heartening that the fishermen parents do not inculcate feeling of guilt and shame among their children when they indulge in obscene language and shameful acts while dealing with parents or with siblings. This has also been confirmed by Kohan (1959), who conducted studies on social class and child rearing practices.

In the same vein Bandura and Associates (1961) have advocated that an aggressive parent serves as a model and promotes aggressive behaviour in the children. All these studies are in line with the observations made by the investigator as regards emotional training of fishermen children. And, in any case, it is established that the training plays an important part in social development as well as in the control of aggression. The studies on Indian children conducted by Carstairs (1957), Bhogle (1978) are not in line; with the results of the present investigation. This may be due to the fact that the present study is based on one of the low caste muslim tribals whose values, cultural norms and social practices are exclusively a unique pattern to their sub-culture. Carstairs and Bhogle have conducted their studies on high caste Rajputs and caste Brahmins and Muslims respectively. The cultural norms

and value orientation of these castes are totally different as compared to fishermen families.

All in all the emotional training of fishermen children is indiscreet, spontaneous and self-oriented. The role of parents in the emotional training of children is devoid of social determinants which contain the emotional education of children in a socially desirable manner. Thus fishermen children, by and large, are aggressive and less prone to fear and jealousy.

## **2. Attitude towards scientific methods of child rearing and child care :**

In the absence of formal education or exposure to means of mass-media, the fishermen families are still following the pre-scientific practices of child rearing. Mention has been made in Chapter-I that these families do not take any special care for child development and child care. Children come just as a routine of biological procreation and no extra care is taken by a carrying woman. Even after delivery, much attention is not given towards the young child and consequently infantile mortality among these families is far higher than in other sections of the society. On the basis of observation and intensive interview conducted with the prospective mothers, the inferences have shown that because of economic stringency and cramped living conditions the mothers are not able to take care of the young children. Some of them die due to drowning and still others due to various diseases. When some of the women were asked about their laxity in child care they reported that a mother has to leave the child to the care of elder siblings till she returns from market in late afternoons. In this way some children die due to negligence and still others become anemic and die of mal-nutrition. These mothers do not have any conception regarding the feeding timings of young babies and

the content of milk to be given in one single feed. Sometimes a child remains hungry for long hours and at other times he is overfed. Similarly there is no fixed pattern whether the child is to be breast-fed or bottle-fed. Medicines which supplement the diet of young children are out of reach as for the economic resources of the family are concerned. The life saving drugs for these young children like polio vaccine, small-pox and inoculation are not also very common among the fishermen families. Usually if a child is taken ill, the family consults any medical practitioner available in the vicinity. Special treatment of children through pediatricians is still unknown to these families. Again, as for the child rearing practices there is no fixed schedule for toilet training, weaning and social orientation of a child. These important steps in the development of a child are either spontaneous or just by indulgence. The mothers do not go by any calender as to when a child is able to digest cereals instead of milk. In the same way the physical and mental development of a child is also spontaneous and no serious attempts are being made by parents towards the normal and healthy development of motor skills. Again the studies on child rearing practices conducted by Bowlby and Bhogle, are not applicable to the child rearing practices of fishermen families, who constitute themselves as a class in isolation. Therefore, it is pertinent to state that the child rearing practices of fishermen families are haphazard and inconsistent with the natural growth and development of children.

### **3. Resistance towards formal education of children :**

The third objective of the present investigation was to explore the factors which are inhospitable for the formal education of fishermen children. On the basis of door to door survey of 70 families the investigator found that out of 113 male children only 21 were attending school at elementary level and among total number of 103 girls only



15 were attending school at elementary level. Only one boy was reading in the Pre-University Class. On the basis of investigation it was found that out of 113 boys only 18.6% were in schools and out of 103 girls only 14.5% were in schools. On the basis of the number of students attending schools the literacy percentage of the fishermen families is only 11%, which is far below as compared to the general literacy statistics of the state. While commenting on the factors which deprive fishermen children from attending schools, the investigator has found that absence of parents for long hours from home is one of the factors which keeps the fishermen children out of school. Besides the nonchalant attitude of parents towards the education of their children is also an important factor. Since fishermen comprise a backward and socially cut-off section of the society, they are less competition oriented and indifferent towards struggle for achievement. By and large they have taken it for granted that whether their children are educated or illiterate, they will pursue the ancestral profession where much of education is not needed. This callous attitude of parents does not encourage the young children towards education for self emancipation and decent living. When the investigator interviewed a number of young boys and girls as to why they were not attending schools, their common reply was that family conditions did not favour their formal education and further it was immaterial so far as their profession was concerned. When these young boys and girls were further interviewed as regards the benefits of education, the reaction of these youngsters was that they are not losers in any way, so long as their routine is not hampered. When asked about the benefits of radio, T. V., cinema, the reaction of these young boys and girls again revealed that they enjoy some music and T. V. programmes to the extent they can understand. Beyond that they feel that they do not miss any thing very vital for their life and existence.



These children also expressed their economic short comings due to which they are supposed to lend a helping hand to their parents and in this way they become an economic asset to their parents instead of a burden, had they been enrolled in schools.

Finally it needs mention that fishermen families have a very low achievement motive as for their child rearing practices are concerned. They do not inculcate among young children the desire to strive for higher goals and better achievement. In this way the young children develop a life style which promotes the fatalistic theory of contentment rather than struggle for higher goals and desire to achieve them. This has also been supported by Mc-Clelland (1961) who is of the opinion that achievement motivation for economic development is the outcome of (a) the training for achievement by parents at home; (b) the frequency of achievement themes narrated to children and above all success and failure as rewarded by parents. Lastly education is a process through which an individual understands his potentialities and makes the best use of his skills. Since fishermen do not promote themselves or their children for a higher achievement their children also do not struggle on their own for formal education and better living condition.

#### **4. Inter-personal perception of parents and children :**

Perception is a gradual process which takes shape with the process of physical and social development. To put it in proper perspective, perception is the key to learning process. Children watch the behaviour of people who are around them and in this way cultivate among themselves socially desirable modes of development. In the process of perceptual behaviour children exercise their imagination and sometimes imitate their parents or siblings. It is also the process through which the child modifies his behaviour

and adopts a set of goals in the midst of which he shapes his imaginations.

Children among fishermen families have a limited environment in the midst of which they keep on shaping their thinking and imagination. Not only that but the little knowledge of parents as regards child development and child care is also an impediment in their perceptual growth. The rough and tumble of family chores does not provide enough thought provoking imagination among children. Mention has already been made that fisherwoman plays a dominant role and her husband is subservient to the directives of his wife. It is with the same feeling that the children of fishermen pattern and shape their role. In the socialisation of behaviour of children; fishermen have many 'do's' and many 'don'ts'. Scolding, slangs and punitive behaviour is very common in the child rearing practices of fishermen families.

Children usually rate their father as a calm and sublime person in the family. The father also reinforces the feelings of his children by demonstrating a sympathetic and non-interfering attitude. On the other hand the mother is expected to be harsh and authoritarian. Accordingly the role playing of boys and girls is shaped on the inter-personal behaviour of parents. The young boys become subservient to their sisters and in the absence of mother the girls manage the family. Besides role playing, and in the absence of any privacy, children also perceive the social and sexual behaviour of their parents. Since the chances of maintaining distance between parents and children are remote, the permissiveness in sex behaviour is taken as a normal life style. It is doubtful whether young boys and girls indulge in sex behaviour but it is certain that they are conscious of the roles of two sexes. But by and large, the adolescent boys and girls get married just around

the onset of puberty. Boys usually play the role of father figure and indulge in adventures in rowing small boats in the midst of river or lake sites. Swimming is a natural phenomena and they become proficient and skillful in swimming by the age of 7 and 8 years.

To sum-up the inter-personal perception of fishermen and their children, the process is free from restraints and condemnation. Usually parents overlook an undesirable behaviour among their children but some times such behaviours are met with severe punishments. Children among fishermen families do not grow in their perceptual behaviour beyond the horizons of family environment. This has also been established by Blvom (1963), who states that half of the adult intelligence is acquired by the child at the age of four years and the child in the lower class home does not receive the kind of stimulation and experiences that are necessary for school readiness. Therefore one of the important tasks for the planners of education is to develop skills and programmes designed to enrich the experiences of our 80% of the children who represent lower sections of our society.

##### **5. Resistance towards family planning :**

After independence India had to fight on a score of fronts which included eradication of disease, famine, poverty and above all the explosion of population. Although the country has succeeded in controlling a number of social and economic problems but unfortunately the control of population and planned parenthood has not been achieved. The statistics of population growth reveals that there has been an alarming growth in our population and this has eroded the achievements made on economic agriculture and industrial fronts. It is reported by Mamoria that there has been 130% growth in our population during the past seventy years. The author further states that among other states



Jammu and Kashmir is one of the State which has a higher growth rate of population than the normal growth rate. To account for the unusual growth of population in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the demographers have presented a host of factors. These include large scale illiteracy, extreme level of poverty in the rural population; which constitutes seventy percent of the population of the State. Because of crippling poverty the rural population is exposed to a number of economic, social and cultural evils. Early marriage coupled with illiteracy is one of the primary factors which interfere with the planning of family. Further the rural population of Kashmir has very small land holdings and therefore depend on numerical strength of members in a family so as to struggle for survival. Almost all poor families subject themselves to the faith that more children in the family will increase the economic strength of the family. Lastly, it needs mention that the Valley being predominantly populated by Muslims, the family planning programmes have not been accepted as these programmes are against the religious doctrines of *Islam*. Reports on the failure of family planning programmes in other countries have also shown that rigid and unshakable attitude of Muslim women, even the educated ones, have rejected the idea of children by choice. Mauldin (1971) in his report on '*The Muslim Attitude towards Family Planning*', has revealed that in the *Haithes* of Muslims it is mentioned that they should multiply for procreation. The *Haithes* states, "Marry, increase and multiply, for I shall pride in you among the Nations on the judgement date". In a pilot study conducted by the present investigator Lidhu (1976), on "*Muslim Women Their Education, Social Class and Attitude Towards Family Planning*", the results have shown that Muslim women irrespective of rural or urban background, literate or illiterate, all have shown resistance towards family planning.

In the present investigation almost 70—80 fishermen families which were conducted for investigation have concertedly defended the directive of Islam that children are the gift of God, there should not be restriction on procreation. Out of seventy couples interviewed by the present investigator it was found that most of the couples were in reproductive age group (30–45 years), and none of them had even the slightest idea or inclination for adopting family planning programmes. It is interesting to note that there were only three ladies who had some delivery problems and had gone for family planning exclusively on medical grounds. But, at the same time they had all the regrets for having lost the charm of child bearing and subjected themselves to a number of physical ailments associated with tubectomy. Similarly out of seventy married members only two persons had gone for vasectomy operations. As reported by these subjects they had gone for such operation without the consent of their life partners. By and large all the ladies who had already six living children and were in reproductive age, expressed that on their own they won't adopt any device for avoiding child bearing.

In view of the influences discussed above, it has been established that fishermen families have the same attitude towards family planning as any other illiterate Muslim family has. Besides the religious factor, economic necessity for more hands and high infantile mortality are some of the potential factors which have adversely affected the acceptance of family planning among these families. On the basis of personal observation the investigator found that families which had more than two to three male hands (in the age of 14 to 20 years) had more income than the families where there was only one adult earning member. Again, it was observed that none of the ladies, in reproductive age-group, had ever taken to use of any contracep-

tives, like, I. U. D., Pills or such prophylactic measures. Equally it is true about the male members of the fishermen families. None of them has taken to the use of condom or any such device which would prevent chances of pregnancy among their female partners.

However, it is worth mention that most of the ladies have fallen victims to various venereal diseases like Licoria, acute back pain and urinal track infections. This was reported by most of the fishermen ladies, who were within the age range of 20–26 years and had already delivered four to five children. The reasons for various venereal diseases are due to prepuberty marriage, lack of adequate care during and after pregnancy and intermittant deliveries without any pause or physical care. It is worth mention that early marriages subject girls to the risk of motherhood at an age when they are oblivious of their feminine problems and child bearing. It has been reported by Saunders, (1936), that early marriages among females has adverse affect on the general health of ladies because early intercourse is injurious to health and affects reproductive functions. Besides, fairly a large number of wives die of child birth. These young women who are just around their pubital years, and have conceived, are not able to carry on their pregnancy because of fragile health and under-developed reproductive parts. Because of these factors, these ladies have often still-births, miscarriages or children who can't survive after birth.

### **An Epilogue :**

Though there is no dearth of researches on child rearing practices in India, yet a researcher is constrained while looking for child rearing practices among the socially disadvantaged sections of the society. Whatever be the achievements of our post independence era, the fact remains that 70% of our population which sustains itself on agriculture and



casual labour continues milling round the yoke of shameless poverty. These sections of society have not benefited from programmes envisaged for the upliftment of the neglected millions. Because of poverty and illiteracy, these people keep on generating social and economic problems for themselves and for the society. They can't send their children to schools as they lend a helping hand to the family, either in petty earnings or in agricultural labour. Even the children from these families, who attend school, become potential dropouts due to ill equipped family conditions. The wastage of manpower and human resources among these families is colossal as far as illiteracy, malnutrition and petty earnings are concerned. The Nation as a whole has to pay heavily for raising the living conditions of the lower sections of our society. But these attempts are being frustrated by the ruinous conditions which emanate from the illiteracy, ill-health and malnutrition of teeming millions. Besides, high infantile mortality, inadequate child care and hazards of early marriage compound the agony of the Nation. Studies in child rearing practices conducted by Nalni Devi (1967), Sinha (1971) and Bhogle (1975), are based on the samples which have been drawn either from urban sections of the society or from the rural population. In the same vein, studies on attitude of parents in relation to the developmental problems of children conducted by Patel (1965), Unnisa (1965), Warty and Mehta (1970), Bhogle (1977), and Nijhawan (1975), are also based on various castes of Hindus or on some sections of Muslims in the country. All these studies are associated with the social conditions of the family attitude of mother i. e. over-indulgent, over-protective, dominant/permissive. And the inferences have been drawn towards the behavioural problems of children.

In the present investigation the thrust of study was on the child rearing practices of canal-boat families, who



constitute a deprived section of the Muslim community in the Valley of Kashmir. Because of a host of social and cultural anomalies and economic stringency these families have a unique life pattern due to which the development of children right from conception to the age of adolescence is socially and emotionally unhealthy. It also merits the attention of those who dedicate themselves to child welfare. Usually a young girl at the age of 13 or 14 is married and becomes a mother hardly around the age of 15 years. It is a very hard fact to imagine that a girl who is socially backward, emotionally tender and physically under-developed has to conceive and carry a child. This young girl is bereft of any education, health care and hygiene as for child bearing is concerned. Whatever scant information these young carrying girls have, is based on imaginary tales or sometimes a mother who is herself an apology for such information, guides her young daughter. Not only that, the cramped living conditions in a small boat, as shown in Plate No. 1, do not provide any privacy to the young carrying girls who could relax or stretch themselves. On the other hand, they have to attend to the family chores and leave the house at day-break and market the fish collected by her husband. No medical care during pregnancy is known to these girls nor is there any increase in the calories of their diet in terms of proteins, iron and mineral salts. Since they manage a coarse meal with great difficulty, fruits, eggs and mutton are out of their routine menu. Miscarriages due to mal-nutrition, over-exertion are very common among these young carrying girls. Some times, they also get primitive and faulty herbal drugs from quacks which create alarming physical problems and sometimes endanger the life of carrying women. The horrifying tales of the carrying fisher women are endless. Sometimes the delivery is premature and often children are still-born. Even after birth, a neonate has not a plain sailing. He has to face the worst conditions for survival. Mother is not able

to provide sufficient milk to the young child, and in this way the child remains under-fed. Usually the children are put on bottle feeding and are thus deprived of emotional warmth and physical contact of mother. The ensuing developmental stages of a new-born child pass on in the midst of helplessness, hope and despair. In this way a fisherman child grows into an adolescent, devoid of emotional attachment or adequate parental affection. His social development is equally faulty and unhealthy. By the time he has reached the age of adolescence or early adulthood, he gets married and transmits the same unhealthy emotional and social development to his progeny.

The cycle of child rearing practices of canal boat families is closely linked with the economic and social life style of these families. There is every possibility that the children of these families may thrive under the sunshine of love, affection, warmth and economically stable conditions; this is a dream of days which are long ahead and subject to efforts of Government and child welfare agencies, who can change the life-style of the fisherman families by providing economic assistance and social recognition through various welfare programmes meant for the upliftment of weaker sections of the society.

# 5

## Comments and Recommendations :

The research on child rearing practices of the canal boat families, conducted by the present investigator, has revealed spine-shivering observations. There is hardly any evidence regarding the normal life of the fishermen families living in Sopore, Bandipora, Tailbal and Dal-Lake.

Usually a fisherman family consists of husband, wife and a number of children who are devoid of any etiquette, mannerliness and above all normal social and psychological built-up.

Because of ignorance and early marriage, the children of fishermen families are exposed to all sorts of contaminations; bad habits and vice. This is because of the fact that both parents stay out of home and children are left to their own fate. Not only that, sometimes a mother has to carry a fondling along with her and this child is left on the road-side while the mother stalls her basket of fish for selling. In this way all sort of dirt and dust and other hazards involving the child become part of the routine life of these children. The government which is conscious, and has the knowledge of the plight of fishermen families, has not done anything practically that would have lessened the agony of these families. Under the welfare programmes, as envisaged for weaker sections of society, government should have introduced creches for the care of fishermen children as this is being done for the children of working-ladies. These creches would have been of immense help to the fishermen families whose children remain unlettered and

uncared for ! There are hardly a few sites like Sopore, Tailbal, Dal-Lake and Bandipora where these creches should be established in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare, Child Care and Education. The opening of these creches near the fishermen sites will arouse a new awakening among the fishermen families, as regards child care, health and hygiene, social and moral education for the young children of these families. Even voluntary agencies could extend a lending hand in the welfare programmes of the fishermen children who are almost destitute in the absence of parental care and adequate look-after. The voluntary organisations like Lions Club and Muslim Welfare Society could have been of great service for the welfare programmes of the fishermen families.

### **B—MOTHER AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMMES :**

In the midst of a number of evils among the fishermen families the worst one is the child-marriage of both boys and girls. Out of seventy families conducted by the present investigator it was observed that all boys and girls are being married between 14 to 18 years and usually it has been found that a young bride becomes mother at the age of 15 to 16 years. Not only that, there is no let-up in procreation and almost after every 18 months a woman delivers a child. This practice has adversely affected the health of ladies and their meager economy which is inhospitable to support them. The tall claims, of the local government, of having made family planning very popular among the weaker sections of the society is a big hoax. In the body of report it has been stated that only three ladies out of a total number of seventy in the reproductive age group had adopted tubectomy. Since these people are ignorant about the hazards of child bearing and the adverse affect of poor economy on the welfare of children, they aught to have been educated by family planning associations and the



government sponsored agencies for adopting small family. Besides ignorance, the dogged attitude of these ladies and their husbands has not permitted them to adopt family planning programmes as it is against the tenets of Islam. There is an urgent need for mobilising the government machinery for the childcare, health of mother and above all, the family planning programmes for these fishermen families.

### **C—EXPOSURE TO MASS-MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION :**

With the help of television and documentary films, it has become very easy to extend social, moral and health education to the backward sections of our society which are socially living a life of isolation. Due to abject poverty and illiteracy, no fisherman family has been able to install a television in their boat/hutment, nor is it possible for their men-folk to read different newspapers or such journals as would offer education in health care, child development and family planning programmes. In this regard; it is recommended that there should be multi-dimensional community centres organised in the vicinity of these fishermen families. These community centres will serve as a liaison between the modern education, health and social awareness and the fishermen families. These centres will offer selected television programmes, documentary films on family planning, hygiene and health care. In this way, it would be possible that these families could join the mainstream of our social development.

### **D—EDUCATION OF CHILDREN :**

Illiteracy among fishermen families is one of the worst calamity. None of the couples out of seventy families was literate and out of 113 male children only 21 were attending

school at various grade levels. In the same vein, out of 103 girls, only 15 were attending school at primary level. Thus, it is clear that literacy percentage of fishermen families is far below the literacy percentage at State and National level. The Government does not seem to have taken cognizance of the total illiteracy of fishermen families. Though the problem is very difficult because male member leaves for fishing early in the morning and is home by late evenings. Similarly, the lady of the house carries the basket of fish for selling and returns back at the close of the day. There is no one at home to prepare children for attending school and in this way the number of illiterate members among fishermen keeps on swelling. In any way the government has to tackle this problem and in this regard a few suggestions could be made. As the government has established mobile schools for Gojjar and Bakerwal children, on the same pattern; separate schools could be established near the fishermen settlements around Dal-Lake, in Sopore, Bandipora and Khannabal. This programme could also be envisaged if the multi-dimensional community centres are set-up within the neighbourhood of fishermen families settled at different places of the Valley. Depriving young and innocent buds from normal social, educational and physical growth is a heinous sin which no civilized society on earth can entertain when the world is moving towards growth and development for all, without discrimination of caste, class and distance. In the total population of about 400 fishermen members, it is shocking to report that only one male adolescent had completed Matriculation.

### E—PROFESSION :

Fishing is one of the most ancient professions in the Valley of Kashmir. Even what Lawrence (1967) has described about the plight of fishermen families merits sympathy and consideration. There has not been any change in the



professional know-how of fish catching during the past centuries, though in other parts of the country like Calcutta, Hyderabad and Madras, the fish catching profession has gone through an enormous change and modern technology has been utilized in the fabrication of fish catching vessels, manufacture of fish-nets and fishing technology. Besides, the fishermen of these states have developed fish processing centres which have elevated their economic prosperity. In Kashmir, neither the fishermen themselves have evolved new technology nor has the government extended any technical know-how for improving the professional know-how in fish catching. Even the nylon thread for weaving the nets has not been made available to the fishermen of the Valley. Their fishing boats are just conventional and their yield is very poor. Again, it is shocking that each and every fisherwoman has to sell fish on her own, instead of collecting all the fish at a central place and marketing the total lot through cooperative system. This is also one of the worst aspects of the fishermen in the Valley. Apart from these harrowing tales, the fishermen have no security against life's hazards and failure of fish crop. Sometimes it happens that floods wash away the fish-catching zones and the fishermen are not in a position to maintain themselves in the absence of any income. Besides, these people have to struggle against the rough and tumult weather and high tides, particularly in the area of Wullar-Lake and River Jehlum. The government must consider to register the insecurity of these fishermen and there should be government sponsored insurance for each and every fisherman.

It may not be out of way to mention, that the Government of Kerala has recently passed a legislation for welfare schemes meant for fishermen. In the same way central government (The Hindustan Times, 2-10-1985) is also planning for introducing some welfare schemes for the

betterment of fishermen. It is expected that the government of Kashmir will also realise the need for establishing some welfare schemes and financial assistance for the fishermen of the Valley. Besides some welfare schemes, these fishermen need to be educated about the latest methodology of fish-catching devices. They also need the improvised equipment like automonitored fishing boats, nylon nets and such other accessories and paraphernalia which will help them in improving their economic condition.

One more dimension regarding the welfare of fishermen families is that government and welfare agencies must take into consideration that fish in Dal-Lake and/or river Jehlum is decreasing in quantity because of water pollution and a crowd of fishermen hunting in one and the same area. In order to circumvent this anomaly, the Government should develop new hatcheries attached to Dal-Lake, river Jehlum and Wullar-Lake. The Kashmir rivers and the lakes do not contain all varieties of fish which are available in other parts of the country, like Hyderabad, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Kerala. In this way it is pertinent that other varieties of fish which yield a rich crop should be introduced in the lakes and rivers of Kashmir. This will be an investment for the economic prosperity of fishermen settled in the Valley of Kashmir. It won't be out of way to mention that professional exchange programmes between the fishermen of Kashmir on one hand, and the fishermen of Madras, Bombay and Kerala on the other, are sponsored so that the fishermen of Kashmir benefit from the modern and latest technology of fish catching, as is being practiced in Kerala, Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Calcutta.

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## Part II

### GUJARS— *Their Attitude Towards Social Change, Education & Modernisation*





## CHAPTER I

### History and background of Gojars :

In the midst of various sub-cultures among the Muslims in the Valley of Kashmir Gojars constitute a separate ethnic group with absolute conservatism in the preservation of their identity. Though they are followers of Islam, like Muslims all over the world, yet their physiognomy, dress, language and social relations are quite unique as compared to their counterparts in any part of the world. Despite the influx of cultural change, technological application at all levels, network of mass-media and communication system, the Gojars of the Valley have resisted change in their life style, farming and interpersonal relationship. This is just like the 'Hoppy' families in Africa about whom Mead (1928 a) states, "Hoppy families in Africa have not been influenced with the change of transport, communication and other innovations".

While tracing the history and background of Gojars; historians and writers are divided on the issue of Gojars as a race. There are views that Gojars were originally Hindus who had settled in different parts of the country namely Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and West Punjab. In this regard the contribution of Fauq (1941) is of historical importance. The author is of the opinion that Gojars belong to the most ancient tribes of India who have been sometimes rulers of Maharashtra; however, because of perpetual fighting between and among the races, Gojars in search of pastures and places of settlement migrated to different parts. In the same vein Munshi (1955) reports that Gojars have migrated to India

from some foreign land but they are essentially Indians settled in different parts of the country. "They had many things in common" and all of them carry from Warrior Clans who started their career between 500 and 700 A. C. In Gojar Dass of which the pivot was the region of "Mount Abu". They were closely allied in blood and adventure, and each of their dynasties, *Pratihharas*, *Palyners*, *Chanlikya* successively rose to imperial power only as a result of decline of its predecessor, and ultimate source of their greatness can be traced to the upsurge of Gujar Dass in 500 A. C. The aggressive vigour which Pratihharas acquired under Nagabbata, when he drove out the Arab in 725 A. C. Their descendents survive today under the name of Rajputs. Puri (1968) holds the same opinion that Gojars are the original inhabitants of India who lived near Mount Abu. Besides the studies on the origin of Gojars which have been conducted by Indians, there are a number of references based on the survey reports of foreigners. Cunningham (1970) states that the Gojars are descendents of *Kushan*, *Yachi* or *Tochan* which are considered to be the tribes of Eastern Tartars. The author maintains that about a century before Christ their Chief conquered Kabul and Peshawar, while his son Hima Kadipises extended his sway over whole of upper Punjab and the banks of Jamuna. His successor Kanishka annexed Kashmir to the kingdom of Tochari.

In the process of subjugation and extension of their empire the Gojars took up challenges in scaling the mountains and extending their empire. G. S. Ghurye (1969) supports the observation of Risley. The author states that some of the clan-names of Rajputs are the same as those of *Gurjar* Tribe or Caste and that the reigning dynasty of Kannauj during 1000 century and after was of the Gojar stock.

As for the history of settlement of Gojars in Kashmir, it is stated that the high mountain peaks of the Valley offered a challenge to Gojars adventurism and the lush green meadows provided long stretches of pastures for grazing their cattle. Ray (1955) also states that the last foreign tribe from north-west who might have settled in Kashmir in pre-Mohammedan days was that of perhaps Gojars. The most ancient classical reference, *Raj Tarangni*, reveals that Gojar king, Raja Boja controlled Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and parts of Kashmir. It is reported that immigration of Gojars started from north Punjab presumably during the *Karkota* period when parts of Punjab were included in the Kashmir Empire.

By now Gojars form a sizable section of population and are settled in various parts of J & K State. These include Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu, Kellar, Tangdar, Karna, Gurez, Shopian, Duksum, Pahalgam and Uri. The settlement of Gojars in Jammu Region is very old and it has been reported by Fauq (1941) who states that Gojars are an ancient race who have settled in Poonch. Another reference of Malik (1957) cited in '*Shahan Gujar*' reveals that Gojars have been flocking into the Valley of Kashmir via Bimber from Jammu Region.

Finally, it is established that there is no dissension among historians about the migration of Gojars into J & K State via Punjab and North West Frontier. Besides, the common fact that Gojars sneaked into the J & K in search of new pastures there is another version that due to the famine which struck in Rajputana, Gujrat and Kathiawar, Gojars migrated to different parts and settled in the Valley of Kashmir as well. Of these migrants some settled in Kangan (Kashmir), Hazara (present Pakistan) and Gilgat. Gojars now living in J & K State are the Progeny of those who migrated to Kashmir directly from Rajputana, Gujrat, Kathiawar and another

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section which migrated from the Gojar tribes settled in Punjab.

As for the origin of the word 'Gujar' Khatana (1974), reports that the word has come from the famous book of Banbhat *Harishcharitra* and it is believed that Gojar is derivative of *Gurujar* which means a valient in Sanaskrit language. In the process of communication word *Gurujar* got deformed into *Gurejar* and then finally into Gojar.



## CHAPTER II

### Culture and pattern of living :

Gojars represent one of the envious Nomadic Tribes in the State of J & K, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. Due to climatic conditions, which vary from place to place, Gojars have attuned themselves to different patterns of life and adjustment. Since the present study was confined to Gojars in the Valley of Kashmir it is pertinent that a descriptive analysis of Gojars in Kashmir be drawn. No doubt, as mentioned earlier, Gojars in Kashmir have taken to Islamic faith and accordingly their dress, way of life, marriage and kinship, all are different as compared to their counterparts settled in other parts of the country. Bamzai (1973), in his famous book titled '*History of Kashmir*' reports Gojars are said to be Rajputs who migrated into Kashmir and embraced Islam. Their language *Gojri* is almost linked with Rajsthani language and dialect. The author further reports that the Gojars settled in Kashmir possess tall personality with Jewish features and caste. Their dress is conventional which is more nearer to Pathans of West Punjab.

In the Valley of Kashmir the Gojars, on the basis of their settlement, can be defined into two categories i. e. Gojars who have settled in remote parts of the Valley and have taken to Agriculture as profession. As regards other category, these are the Gojars who have not taken to a settled life. They keep on moving from pasture to pasture as the main source of their livelihood is rearing of sheep and buffalo. The semi-settled Gojars as mentioned above have imbibed certain social and cultural imprints



from the local Muslims where as the nomadic gojars have not been influenced by science, technology or political awakening. The nomadic gojars in the Valley are commonly known as *Dodhi Gojars* and *Gojar Bakarwals*. *Dodhi Gojars* have also been given name of *Binhara Gujars*. *Bakarwal Gojars* who shepherd their cattle to most envious pastures situated at high altitudes are known as Bakarwals because of their source of sustenance which is the sheep and buffalo.

#### Type of dwelling :

The hutments of the semi-settled and mobile Gojars are commonly known as *Kothas*. It is a mud house against the slope of a hillock. The construction is totally devoid of any ventilation except a small entry door. The area inside is around 140 Sq. Ft. which is shared by animals as well as human beings. The floor of the house is just natural soil which has been leveled so as to make the movements of inhabitants convenient. In the ceiling there is a small hole which is the only outlet for all types of bad odour or gases like smoke, that comes from dung and left-over fodder of animals. Under these conditions it can be well imagined that the Gojars live under most unhygienic conditions. Because of perpetual moisture inside the *Kotha* different types of insects and bacteria, breed a host of communicable diseases, to which the Gojars are exposed. It is really a wonder how Gojars survive under such unhealthy conditions. There is no provision of drainage in the hutments. The *Kothas* are scattered in all directions at the low lying hill-tops of the Valley and can be seen right from Banihal, District Anantnag upto District Baramulla and District Kupwara i. e. northern part of the Valley. Besides these areas the hill-tops from north-east and north-west of the Valley are also punctuated with such *Kothas* which are being used as living huts by the Gojars. Shopian in District Pulwama and Tehsil Uri in District Baramulla are thickly dotted with such hutments.



Plate II—  
Gojar Tribal



### Language :

Gojars in the Valley and more so in District Baramulla use only one dialect which is known as *Gojri*. This language is partly influenced by Punjabi, Sanskrit and Dogri dialect as well because the spoken language of Gojars carries a number of words which are almost similar to Punjabi or Dogri language. The script of *Gojri* language is in Urdu and a number of books which have been cited in the foregoing pages are available in Urdu script. These views have been supported by (Grierson, 1927 and Utender 1961).

### Religion :

There is not much confusion over the theory of religion as practiced by Gojars in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Those who have come under the influence of Muslims i. e. in the Valley of Kashmir and Poonch are the followers of *Islam*. And still others who are scattered in Jammu Province like Mirpur, Bimber, Rajouri are followers of Hinduism. As far the historical evidence reported by Bamzai (1973) Gojars migrated to State of Jammu and Kashmir via North Western Frontier and Jammu Province. These two different entry points into the State of Jammu and Kashmir have influenced the faith of Gojars. Gojars who entered from North-Western Frontier embraced Islam and those who entered from Jammu Province continue to practise Hinduism as their religion. In the Valley of Kashmir Gojars are all followers of Islam and strictly adhere to teachings of *Holy Quran*. The Gojars, because of their strict religious adherence, have emerged as the most outstanding tribe who are trusted for their honesty, dedication and sincerity.

### Dress :

Gojars in the Valley of Kashmir are conventional in their dress and have not changed their style despite the changes that have taken place since their migration. The



males wear a long shirt and a trouser. Besides, they wear a turban (head cloth) which also bears a different style and is nearer to people of North-Western Frontier. As for the dress of ladies, usually they wear a long shirt and a shilwar with a cap on their head. Though Purdha system among ladies is not observed but usually Gojar ladies do not face strangers and when they move out of home they wear a cloth to cover their bodies. It is known as '*Chipra*'.

### **Marriage :**

Marriage as an institution carries high sanctity among the tribal Gojars who are settled in Valley of Kashmir. Early marriage is very much in practice among Gojars and marriage is solemnised in the most simple form. A *Maulvi* (religious priest) performs the religious duty while the bride and the groom offer their consent for marrying together. The corrupt practices of dowry and bargaining have not sneaked into the culture of Gojars. Rather, marriage being a very sacred function, relations and friends come forward with whatever help they can offer, to the parents of bride. Even the family of bridegroom extends some helping hand to the parents of bride. Very plain food comprising milk, butter and rice is being served to guests from both sides. In very rare cases a feast is arranged, where preparations of mutton are being served. Divorce is not very common among Gojars. However, according to Islamic Law, if a Gojar can afford, he may have more than one wife. Adultery is strictly forbidden and punishable. Usually a woman may be divorced because of her infidelity. There are other reasons which may make a husband to divorce his wife. These could be on the basis of health or failure of a woman to bear a child.

### **Occupation and source of income :**

Gojars are very hardworking tribals. Besides their trustworthiness they are being liked as labourers and semi-



skilled workers. The main occupation of Gojars in the Valley of Kashmir is cattle rearing particularly sheep, buffalo and horses. This is considered the primary source of income for their sustenance. In the Valley of Kashmir and District Baramulla, Gojars are mostly engaged in this type of profession. However, a small section of Gojars engage themselves in farming, but the land holdings being very small, farming becomes only a secondary source to their income. As has been mentioned earlier that Gojars in the Valley are settled on the high altitudes, the quality of cultivable land on such altitudes is very poor and the output is usually negligible. Those of the Gojars, whose resources through cattle rearing and agriculture do not help them to sustain themselves, take to semi-skilled jobs like labour, household services or watchmen. In any case Gojars in the Valley of Kashmir and District Baramulla are not self-sufficient in their day-to-day requirements. Very few Gojars are engaged in whole time business or semi-skilled jobs.

#### **Food and drinks :**

Gojars in general have very simple eating habits. As for food and drinks in the Valley of Kashmir. Gojars are popularly known as the consumers of milk, butter and coarse grains. Maize is considered as a staple diet of Gojars. They usually start their day with a glass of butter milk and chapati of corn. The same food is being repeated at intervals during the day.

As for the beverages Gojars are not used to any sort of toxic drinks as it is forbidden according to their religious teachings. Even consumption of tea was not common among the Gojars in the Valley but, during the past ten to fifteen years Gojars have taken to tea as a light beverage, but it is not very common.

## CHAPTER III

### Planning and research layout :

The present investigation is related to the developmental programmes in Education, Agriculture vis-a-vis the attitude of Gojars towards such programmes. While developing the framework of the investigation the suggestions from various experts were taken into account. It was observed that the proposed investigation be confined to a single village in District Baramulla, Tehsil Uri. On the basis of demographic conditions and the population of Gojars the investigator conducted a preliminary survey of various villages in the vicinity of Uri town. The objective of this survey was to select a village which is exclusively inhabited by Gojars. Secondly it was also considered that the location of the village be such that neither it is too far from the semi-urban atmosphere i. e. (Uri Town) nor too close to the town. This consideration was taken into account for observing the behaviour of Gojars towards the modern system of urban life. Besides the above mentioned points it was also considered that location of village should be such that its people have easy access to modern facilities like education, guidance for agricultural improvements, guidance for cattle rearing and changing social values. Out of about 20 villages scattered around Uri town the investigator finally adopted *Garkot* as a village for the proposed investigation. The village is situated at a height of 3000 feet from the sea level. The village is settled on a hilly terrain which is mostly barren because of rocks and sandy soil. A small stream flows down the rocks carrying down the icy-water from snow covered mountains. The total area of the village is about 93, 350 Sq. Mts. Total population of

Gojars in the village is about 700 members. Of these, there are 200 women within the age range of 20–70 years and 197 men within the age range of 20–75 years. As for the proportion of boys and girls within the age range of 9–18 years, the number of boys is 70 and the number of girls is 36. In the village Garkot there are six schools—one is a boys' Middle School and the other schools are only upto primary level. Besides, there is one Girls' Primary School also, Girls are also attending the middle School for Boys.

#### **Purpose and objectives of the proposed research :**

The Government of India has committed itself to the over all development of the country through various programmes. For this purpose the first Prime Minister of India, Late Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and his cabinet formulated a charter of directives which are being considered as guide-lines for the multipurpose developmental plans of our country. These plans are being carried out by the Planning Commission and till date six Five Year Planning Programmes have been completed successfully. Under these planning programmes special provision has been made for the upliftment of backward classes of the society. These programmes envisage compulsory and free education for backward communities, scholarships, free books and uniform for their children; reservation in professional colleges and in different service cadres; subsidy in improving agriculture and cattle breeding.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, which has a sizable population of Gojars, has monitored a special cell in the secretariat for the overall development of Gojars. All such programmes introduced by Central and the State Government are supposed to have made a definite impact on the educational, social, economic and agricultural development

of Gojars in Kashmir. But, how far the benefits of these programmes have percolated from Central and State Governments down to the common tribes-men. (Gojars) is the basic objective round which the present research has been formulated. No doubt that hearsay beliefs, gossips and different type of telltales reveal that crores of Rupees which have been spent on the comprehensive development of Gojars and other backward communities have not benefited common man at the lowest rung. How far such speculations are nearer the truth was also one of the important considerations of this investigation. The investigator, while working on such hunches and doubts, formulated a research project for conducting an intensive survey of any village of Gojars in Tehsil Uri. The project was formulated on the expert advice and guidance of sociologists and social workers. It was suggested that the objectives of the project should be broadly defined and evaluated in the context of operational definitions. Accordingly a number of objectives were screened and considered for investigation. These include :—

1. No. of school going children in the village within the age group of 6—18 years ;
2. No. of children attending school at various grade levels ;
3. Report from the school regarding the scholastic achievement and drop-out percentage of Gojar boys ;
4. No. of girl students attending school ;
5. Attitude of parents towards the education of their children ;
6. Attitude of parents towards social change, family welfare programmes including family planning ;
7. Influence of mass media on personal and social life of Gojar families.

#### **Layout of the project :**

As it was considered that the project will be undertaken on a single village Garkot ; in Tehsil Uri, for this purpose



the investigator conducted a preliminary survey of five families settled at different places in the Village. On the basis of various clues leading to the desired information, two different check-lists were framed. One check-list in the form of interview schedule was designed for parents. The purpose of this schedule was to collect information on a number of factors like,

- (i) Parents,
- (ii) Siblings,
- (iii) School,
- (iv) Economic condition of the family,
- (v) Demographic conditions,
- (vi) Religion,
- (vii) Culture,
- (viii) Social Conditions,
- (ix) Political attitude,
- (x) Development in agriculture,
- (xi) Improvement in Livestock.

The second check-list was designed for teachers for collecting information on,

- (i) Number of Gojar boys/girls attending school,
- (ii) Class room behaviour,
- (iii) Drop-out rate,
- (iv) Stagnation rate,
- (v) Attitude of Gojar boys towards science and arts subjects,
- (vi) Placement of Gojar boys in different vocations.

These interview schedules were tried on a few families and the final format was designed after eliminating such statements as were considered to be redundant or difficult for collecting information.



### Collection of information :

Prior to collection of information, with the help of formal interview schedules, the investigator compiled the list of families living in village Garkot; Tehsil Uri. This list was prepared on the basis of 1981 census report. While contacting individual families, it was observed that the Gojars settled in Garkot had left for pastures and meadows which are situated at higher altitudes. The specific area where the Gojars of this area move is known as '*Dhandari*', which is 14 Kms. ahead of village Garkot. Since the Gojars are seasonal nomads, during summer they move to high altitudes in search of green pastures for their cattle and during winter they move downwards in order to protect themselves and their cattle from biting cold, snow and frost. There were 32 families in the village and attempt was made to cover all the individual families. The administration of parent-comment-check list and teacher-comment-check list was done in a phased programme. Ten to fifteen families were contacted daily for collecting detailed information. The information was collected by the investigator and the associate research scholar. After the completion of family interview schedule the investigator contacted the schools in the neighbourhood of the village where the Gojar boys and girls were enrolled. The schools included are Govt. High School, Lagama Uri; Govt. Middle School, Garkot and Govt. Primary School for Boys and Govt. Primary School for Girls, Garkot. Gojars are very active both as individuals and as a Tribe. They enjoy exchange of views with strangers as well as with their own friends. Though women observe Paidah system but this is not in vogue in poor families where women like men struggle for their livelihood. The investigator did not face any resistance from men or women while collecting information.

As has been mentioned earlier, the study was conducted on 32 Gojar families of Garkot. The information was collected under different headings. In the first instance the investigator collected information on the age and marital status of the family head. It is interesting to note that the age of family head (male) ranged between 22-80 years and the maximum number of male members were in the age range of 27 to 40 years. In the same way the age of women i. e. (spouse) ranged between 20 to 68 years, with maximum number of women falling in the age range of 25 to 30 years. The figures of the age range of men and women are given in Table-I. below :-

**TABLE—I**

**Showing Population Distribution of Gojar—Men, Women & Children.**

Age range :	Adults :		Children :	
	Male :	Female :	Male :	Female :
0 — 9	... ..	... ..	35	43
10 — 19	... ..	... ..	90	92
20 — 29	21	52	.. ..	... ..
30 — 39	81	77	... ..	... ..
40 — 49	40	38	... ..	... ..
50 — 59	33	22	... ..	... ..
60 — 69	13	9	... ..	... ..
70 — 79	7	2	... ..	... ..
80 — 89	2	... ..	... ..	... ..
Total ...	197	200	125	135

As for the number of children each family bore 4 to 5 children within the age range of 5 to 15 years. There were hardly a few families where the number of children was restricted to one or two. The infantile mortality rate

among Gojars is very high. On the basis of investigation it was observed that each family had lost one or two children due to unhygienic child-birth, measles, smallpox or pneumonia. As for the ratio of male and female children, the number of male children is greater as compared to number of female children. The proportion is in the ratio of 2:1. Out of 70 male children within the age range of 6-16 years only 25 were in school at various grade levels. Similarly out of 36 girls within the age range of 6-16 years only 3 were in school and the rest were just loitering or engaged in household or cattle rearing.

As for the profession of male members, most of them are engaged in cattle rearing or unskilled jobs. Out of 32 families conducted by the investigator the job stratification of male members was found to be conventional as shown in Table-II. No woman was engaged in any vocation except the routine household work.

**TABLE—II**

**Showing Vocational Position of Gojars (No. = 32)**

Agriculture :	Cattle rearing :	Skilled :	Semi-skilled :	Business :
All	All	Driver=1 Policeman=1	Labourers=25	6

As for the women all the 32 ladies conducted under the present investigation were totally illiterate and were engaged in the routine chores work of their household. The common engagement of the ladies is assisting the male members in agriculture, rearing of cattle and collection of firewood for cooking purposes.

The land holdings of the Gojars are almost insignificant. A few of them own walnut trees which yield them about Rs. 150/- to Rs. 200/- per annum. The main source is the product from their cattle. Even the quality and quantity of cattle is so poor that Gojars can not make satisfactory living. It is pathetic to note that many articles of day to day use like match box, sugar, tea leaves are not within the purchasing capacity of these families.

## CHAPTER IV

### Analysis and discussion :

The present study on Gojars of District Baramulla was taken up for analysis of various developmental programmes envisaged for the social, economic, agricultural and educational development. Keeping in view the opinion of experts, only one village was adopted for an intensive study and it was observed that this will be a representative sample of the total population of Gojars in Tehsil Uri. It needs mention that the Central and the State Government has made special constitutional provisos for the upliftment of Gojars, as a tribal race. But it is really pathetic and unfortunate that the tall claims of the Government have not been practically established while conducting door to door survey of this Village.

Keeping in view the objectives of this study the investigator had developed an interview schedule for collecting information about the total number of Gojar boys and girls within the age range of 6 to 18 years. On the basis of collected information as shown in Table—III, there were hardly 28 boys and girls within this age range; who were attending schools at various grade levels.

TABLE—III

Showing age and class of Gojar Boys and Girls Attending Schools in Garkot and Lagama ( Uri ) :

Age-range :	Class :	Male :	Female :	Location of school :
5-14 years	Primary	15	3	Garkot ( Uri )
15-17 years	Middle	8	Zero	Garkot ( Uri )
18-20 years	High	2	Zero	Lagama ( Uri )



Whereas, a major chunk of boys and girls in this age group were unlettered and loitering. This is one of the most important issue which should attract the attention of Government and Educationists, that why Gojar boys and girls are not attending school at different levels? It has already been mentioned in the foregoing pages that in the Village 'Garkot' there is a separate primary school for boys and girls, besides a middle school. Despite the availability of schools; why the Gojar boys and girls are not attending the schools is being ascribed to a number of factors. Firstly the economic condition of Gojar families is so pathetic and dismal that each member from a 6 year old child to a grown-up adult is jostling against the economic odds and making little contribution to the family. Usually the young boys and girls take care of livestock and parents take to skilled or unskilled jobs, either at home or in the fields. The most common jobs for the adults are collecting hay, felling of trees, marketing of milk products which include milk and ghee. Among the 32 families conducted by the investigator not a single parent (father or mother) had any formal or informal education except that male members were able to offer prayers *Nimaz* which they had learnt by rote. Even those children who were attending school were not able to explain the elementary information related to their teaching and learning.

The repulsive attitude of Gojar parents and their children towards formal schooling is depriving hundreds of our future citizens from understanding their constitutional rights and duties. Even now the special concessions like interest free loans, free education for children and subsidised agricultural equipment is not being utilized by Gojars, just because of ignorance and social distortions. On the other hand these available facilities are being misused. For instance a child is kept in school just to collect scholarship or uniform. It is shocking to note another manipulation of Gojar

family that a jersey cow was purchased on subsidized rates but when the Gojar had no source to purchase fodder for the cow, the cow was manually skidded from the hill-top in order to get insurance covering on the life of the cow.

The education of girls is the first casualty in the Gojar families. Because of a host of inhibitions coupled with the concept of Purdha the girls are not permitted to attend schools or functions where they are exposed to strangers. While surveying the educational statistics of girls from the local schools of Garkot and Govt. High School for Girls, Lagama, the investigator found that no Gojar girl had been on roles in the Primary or High School. There might have been some stray cases where a Gojar girl was permitted to attend an elementary school but was removed by parents for unknown reasons. This is based on the conversation, the investigator had with the local female teachers.

Commenting on the reports of teachers. Gojar boys in primary school, Garkot and High School, Lagama are reported to be irregular, repeaters of the same class, drop-outs etc. but otherwise well disciplined and obedient. It is interesting to note that the principal and staff of Government Higher Secondary School, Lagama had all appreciation for the strict discipline and obedience which Gojar boys demonstrate in their schools. Perhaps this is due to the puritanic life style of Gojars. Moreover, the modern sources of mass-communication like television, radio and cheap literature has not found way into the Gojar families. The teachers further reported that Gojar boys are quite enthusiastic about sports and adventure, but do not demonstrate same spirit in their day to day classroom performance.

As for the attitude of parents towards the education of their children, the investigator has observed that they

are least interested in the education of their children. No Gojar parent has been visiting the local primary school or high school, Lagama for making any enquiry regarding his ward. However, the teachers of the three schools defended the absence of parents from visiting the school on the plea that Gojar parents are always busy in search of food and fodder. But they are meticulously present on the day when their child is supposed to receive any financial support or scholarship, the teachers added. The dismaying plight of education of Gojar boys and girls should be taken with a serious concern in view of huge amounts spent on the education of backward tribes like Gojars. There are very insignificant cases where Gojar boys have attained the degree of Matriculation or have joined any professional college like medical, engineering, agriculture. However, two Gojar students who had passed graduation after matriculation (as teacher candidates), were admitted to B. Ed. College for Teacher Training. There was only one student from Tehsil Uri who was a student in the Faculty of Law in the Kashmir University. No female candidate was found in any of the professional colleges. This is shown in Table-IV.

**TABLE—IV**

**Professional Employment of Gojar Boys and Girls from 1980—1984 :**

Poly- technique :		Medicine :		Engineering :		Teacher Training :		Law :	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
						B Ed	BEC	B Ed	BEC
3	...	1	...	...	...	6	6	...	...

**Note :—** The figures have been collected on the basis of door to door survey of Gojars in Garkot village.

### **Social conditions :**

As for the social life, there has been absolutely no change in the dress, rituals and conventional style of Gojars. I strongly support the observations of Munshi (1955) who had conducted a similar survey on the Gojars of Bisanan (Pahalgam) as early as 1945. The author had observed and this holds good even today for the Gojars of Garkot, Uri, that economically Gojars are very poor; educationally they are unlettered and socially they are backward. Since the social change is closely related to economic prosperity, Gojars in Tehsil Uri have not benefited from the economic assistance provided by the Central and State Governments. This is partly because of ignorance and fear-psychoses that most of them do not avail the loan facility of banks, because they are afraid of heavy interest rate and even conscious that they may not be able to return the loan. Only the representative Numberdar or the Leader of the Tribe benefits from such facilities. These observations are in line with some of the studies conducted on backward tribes and scheduled caste families conducted in other parts of the country.

Because of illiteracy and certain dogmatic religious beliefs the Gojars denounce the unnatural act of family planning. Out of 32 families conducted by the investigator, each family had three to four children and the parents were reluctant to go for family planning. In the absence of mass-media and social contacts, most of the Gojar couples were not aware of family planning programmes. When a few families were interviewed and were educated about the family planning programmes they dismissed the idea as irreligious. The investigator could not go ahead on this issue with these families.

Besides illiteracy coupled with poverty, the resistance of Gojars towards family planning is a matter of concern which should be taken seriously at the National level. The



statistics of family welfare programmes in Tehsil Uri does not reveal that any Gojar male or female has gone for family planning. The conventional rituals, fads and attitudes are still in vogue. Gojar folk-songs are very common among the tribal Gojars. These folk-songs include the poetry written by Punjabi writers and are based on some legendary themes like Sassi-Pannu and Waris Shah.

The social life of Gojars is confined within their family members. Meetings with neighbours and relations are not very common except for occasions like marriage, mourning or celebration of any common religious festival. It has been mentioned earlier that out of 32 families included in the present investigation, only two families had their male members employed and had a stable source of income. Of these, one person was employed as a Police Constable and the other person, representing another family, was employed as a Driver. In this way the poor economic condition of Gojars has continuously made an adverse impact on their personal and social life. Children are half-naked and even sometimes dressed in tattered rags.

Since economic and social condition of a family determines food and eating habits, there has not been any change in the eating habits of Gojars. Even prior to independence the staple food of these families was maze, milo and butter milk. Some times during summer they also make use of wild vegetables which grow in the pastures where they shepherd their flocks. Despite a rough and coarse food Gojars maintain a very sturdy health and body structure. However, children and ladies are seen pale and anemic. Use of tea is a luxury and it is not common to all families. Gojars also make use of mutton which is available from their own livestock. But it is a tragedy to note that no healthy animal is slaughtered. Sheep or buffalo which become physically worn-out or immobile and have no chance



to survive are slaughtered for eating. Most of the Gojars, both male and female, are not used to any toxic beverages but use of snuff and smoking is a common feature among Gojars.

### **Health and hygiene :**

Since the Gojars enjoy an envious climate and open air flavoured with the wild trees and flowers they maintain an average normal health. Obviously one can not live on air and water alone. Calories of food which maintain normal body temperature, blood composition and general vitality are an asset to human physiology, without which survival becomes impossible. In the present study the investigator observed that most of the Gojar ladies and children were suffering from diseases like chronic bronchitis, round worms, hookworms and gastro-intestinal dysfunction.

As for the general hygiene, except the outdoor atmosphere, the Gojar huts (Kothas) are filthy, devoid of any ventilation and hygiene. It has been mentioned earlier that the hut is shared by family and cattle together. In this way the air inside the hut is stuffy and full of bacteria; breeding a host of diseases. Although there is no dearth of fresh water around the huts of Gojars, yet just by ignorance regarding health and hygiene, they do not wash their clothes regularly nor do they go for daily hot/cold water bath.

Delivery among ladies is absolutely a chance and not an organized pattern as in civilized societies. Normally a Gojar lady delivers without the assistance of a skilled or semi-skilled medical attendant and the chances of survival for the mother and the neonate are subject to natural circumstances. Sometimes a lady, moving with the Caravan of sheep and men, delivers just on the way-side and next moment takes to her routine course.

**Political awakening :**

No matter how the State and Central Government may strive for political freedom and universal adult franchise for all sections of society, it will continue to be an utopia till the common man is not lettered which will enable him to understand the rights and duties in a free and democratic society. This statement is more true about the political life of Gojars whose literacy percentage is not even five percent. On the basis of investigation the investigator observed that Gojars, irrespective of age and sex, had never experienced how to cast a vote. On the other hand, as reported, their votes are being collected by the political agents of various parties who cast these votes into the ballot boxes of their respective representatives. When the Gojar men and women were asked about the various political parties they failed to name even the local parties let alone the political parties at the National level. The only understanding about the political parties was that they support the National party of Late Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah.

## CHAPTER V

### Suggestions :

It is an established fact that any project for developmental programmes is backed by follow-up programmes so as to weed out obstructing snags and plug the missing links. Similarly the programmes for the development of backward sections of our society should be evaluated at different intervals.

While examining the social, educational and political development of Gojars, the present investigator observed that there has not been a strict follow-up programme and evaluation of the developmental plans meant for Gojars.

- (1) Education which is the primary requirement for social and political improvement should be given top priority. The Government and the planning agencies should look into the factors which prevent Gojar children from staying in classes at different grade levels. In this direction the agencies associated with 'Adult Education' should contact Gojar families individually and collectively and educate them regarding the long term benefits of formal education for their children. Attempt should also be made to organise publicity programmes for motivating Gojars towards the available educational facilities.
- (2) Similarly, change in the existing social pattern of Gojars needs a persuasive effort, on behalf of social agencies for modernizing the social structure of Gojar families. This could be done through social education programmes to be organised by the Department of Social Welfare.

The programmes which need to be taken care of include improvement in social interaction, motivating Gojars for adopting modern system in their living pattern, like dwelling, dress, eating habits. care for health and hygiene. If a country like China could eliminate a number of diseases because of the adventurous team of bare-footed doctors, it is equally possible in our country if the dedicated medical practitioners commit themselves to elevating the health and hygiene of our backward communities and backward tribes. Mobile doctors with compact medical requirements could go a long way in educating our illiterate Gojars for maintaining certain basic conditions for their health and hygiene. As for eating habits our mobile doctors associated with experts in food and nutrition could educate the Gojars how to utilize available resources in food and other edibles. This includes coarse food, milk-products, green vegetables and wild fruits.

- (3) In the absence of formal education, liberation from economic and political slavery becomes only a cry in wilderness. If a Gojar adult is not aware of his political rights and does not know the political parties at the State or National level, it is impossible for him to exercise his right of franchise in right direction. Obviously it is pertinent to note that political education of our backward sections and backward tribes of our society should be taken at a war footing at State and National level. The Election Commission and the Social Welfare Organisations must come forward and contribute towards the political awakening of the down-trodden and unlettered sections of our society.

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## **Part III**

***The Khokhas and  
The Bombas :  
Tribals Settled at Boniyar***

## The Khokhas and the Bombas Tribals Settled at Boniyar

Though the geographical location of the valley of Kashmir is such that its mountains have made this beautiful land impregnable to foreign invaders, yet the committed soldiers, religious preachers and writers of history have braved all the rough and tumble for getting into the Valley. Political diplomats, kings and conquerors, *Rishis* and *Sufies*, all have been attracted by the composite culture, natural beauty and tolerant attitude of the people of this valley. Religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, all have enjoyed the celebrated patronage from the people of this valley. Among the Hindus *Gandharwa* sect *Saivism* enjoyed a unique patronage during the seventh century. This is reflected in the historical monuments, surviving to date. The famous temple situated at Boniyar (District Baramulla) is one of the oldest temples which depicts the influence of *Saivism* in the seventh century in Kashmir. The temple of Boniyar is a unique structure which portrays the saivic influence and philosophy of that time (Kak, 1971)

Under the influence of *Saivism* and due to the beautiful location of the then national highway (Jhelum Valley Cart Road) Boniyar, which is situated on the banks of the River Jhelum between Gingal and Mohra on the Baramulla Uri Highway, became a prominent halting station, where travellers used to stay and practise their religious philosophy. The *Khokhas* and the *Bombas* (both migrant tribals), who seem to have been occasional visitors to the valley from the North West Frontier Province, settled themselves permanently at Boniyar near Rampur on Baramulla Uri Road.

According to Drew, (1875) as stated in *the Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh* (1890), "In the extreme north-west of Chibhal and beyond it as well, on the borders of Kashmir are two races somewhat different from the rest. These are Khokhas and Bombas; they people the banks of the Jhelum between Gingal and Muzaffarabad and up the lower part of the Kishan Ganga Valley. The Bombas prevail on the right bank of the Jhelum and the Khokhas on the left."

In legends and history, the Khokhas and Bombas have been depicted as dangerous and awesome people, with the mention of whose name not only children but adults too, used to tremble and feel horrible, because of the terror their name (Khokha) carried.

It needs mention, that Boniyar is situated neither in the plains nor at high altitude, rather it swings like a small valley between the foot hills, through which the Jhelum Valley Cart Road is stretched in a zig-zag manner from Baramulla to Muzaffarabad. A small stretch of the River Jhelum flows through the foot hills of Boniyar while spinning its way to the present day Pakistan. According to Kalhana, this beautiful foot hill station was decorated by lofty temples with resting places.

With regard to the origin and background of *Khokhas* it is reported that basically they were Rajputs and embraced Islam during the time of Zain-ul-Abidin's reign in Kashmir (Sufi 1974). The word 'Khokha' is the derivative of Khoka Khan, who is said to have been the leader of this tribe. It is reported by Bamzai (1973), that these two tribes, the Khokhas and Bombas, took services under the rule of Zain-ul-Abidin. These tribals were offered some small *Jagirs* in Boniyar and the areas of Rajwar in Tehsil Handwara. Some of them settled in Machipora a border

tehsil in District Kupwara, and looked after small kingdoms under the central rule of Zain-ul-Abidin and the Moughals.

### **Physique**

As has been mentioned earlier, the Khokhas are basically the descendants of the Rajputs. They bear a tall and lofty personality with an ectomorphic physique. The Khokhas are sturdy, tall and hard-working people and resemble the Frontier Pathans. With the passage of time, the two tribal classes, the Khokhas and Bombas, attuned themselves to the local, social and cultural conditions. Although the marriages between the two tribals are restricted within their own community, yet there are some instances where the Khokhas have cultivated social and cultural relationship with the local inhabitants commonly known as the Pahari Muslims.

### **Dress**

The dress of the Khokhas is in no way different from the dress of the Pathans. They wear shirts with long sleeves and shalwar-type Pajama. Besides, they wear a special headgear like a turban which resembles the pattern of the turban worn by the Gojars. It is stated that the Khokhas generally wear home-spun woollen cloth so as to keep them warm particularly during the winter season.

### **Language**

The long stretch between Muzafarabad (Now in occupied Kashmir) and Baramulla is inhabited by people of different dialects and sub-cultures. But most of the inhabitants in this stretch are those who have settled after their migration from North West Frontier. Therefore, the language spoken by the people in this part of the valley is mixed which



is known as *Pahari*, with words from 'Persian', Sanskrit and Prakrit. Besides the *Pahari* language, Punjabi and Kashmiri are also being spoken in this part of the valley. The spoken language of the Khokhas is mixture of *Pahari* and Punjabi.

### Marriage

Marriage among the Khokhas constitutes an important social and religious custom. Usually, boys and girls are married at an early age, ranging between sixteen to eighteen years. The reasons for early marriage, among the Khokhas, are large scale illiteracy, economic compulsions and the ritualistic attitude, of marrying their children, just at the threshold of puberty. Since the general economic condition of the Khokhas is not comfortable, marriages are performed in a very simple manner and without any demonstration of extravagance or pomp and show. It needs mention that the Khokhas and Bombas in Boniyar and District Kupwara are followers of Islam, therefore, marriage and other customs are performed according to the Islamic law. Because of illiteracy and social backwardness, the two tribals, i. e. ; the Khokhas and Bombas do not follow the modern programmes of planned parenthood. Therefore, the acceptance of family planning, now and in future, is not in accordance with the customs and the laws which govern them.

The newly-weds bear children when they are around the age of 18 to 19 years and the couples keep on procreating till the woman is healthy and is in reproductive age. The male children as compared to the females are given preference and recognition. This is in accordance with the conventional patriarchal pattern. In performing the religious and social customs the Khokhas and Bombas observe certain rituals because of their ancient background, i. e. ; Hinduism. It is reported that these tribals worship

certain trees like the Birch, which is considered as a sacred tree and its 'bark' is used as sacred component in performing Yajnas by the Hindus.

## Education

Education as a medium of cultural, social and economic development has remained the weakest link in the modernisation of backward communities in the valley, more so in the backward areas where means of communication and mass-media have not touched the population. The Khokhas and Bombas, like other backward communities, are still living in the gloom of illiteracy. They do not send their children to schools but, on the other hand, engage them for cattle rearing or petty household labour. The census reports of 1981, reveal that the literacy percentage of the Khokhas and Bombas is 7% among the males and insignificant among the females. The Khokha families stick to their traditional reservations as regards female education. There were hardly five to six Khokha girls who were studying in the 5th standard, but none of the girls were found to be studying in higher classes or at the college level. The investigator visited a number of schools in Boniyar where the Khokha children attend school at different grade levels. Most of the children were studying in the 9th class and a few were in higher secondary schools at Baramulla, 30 km. from their home town. As for the formal education of the children within the age group of 6-14 years, it is reported that percentage of both boys and girls is 9.4%. Again on the basis of census report of (1981), it is observed that so far no one from the Khokhas and Bombas has pursued any higher educational programme or qualified from any professional institution, whereas the local Muslims from the same area of Boniyar and beyond have qualified and are holding envious positions in various offices in the Government and the Private sector.

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Present Study :**

The review of background, culture, customs, and education, as mentioned earlier, offered a wide canvas for the intensive study of the Khokhas settled at Boniyar in District Baramulla. It has also been mentioned earlier that the Khokhas and Bombas have not taken to formal education as compared to local Muslim population of Boniyar. Therefore, it was considered to look into the details which discourage the Khokhas and Bombas from educating their children. For this purpose a try-out questionnaire was administered on a small sample of ten families settled in Boniyar. On the basis of responses, the final questionnaire was developed in 'Yes' and 'No' form. And the final administration of the questionnaire included forty families from a total number of 64 families which are settled at Boniyar. It was not possible to include all the families as some were engaged in manual labour at far off places. The information from each family, was conducted from the family head male/female. The investigator along with his research assistant conducted the interviews regarding the areas included in the interview schedule. For precision and objectivity the statements were read-out in the Urdu language, and the responses were recorded against each statement. On the basis of pooled information various inferences were drawn and these have been discussed in the following pages.

### **Analysis and interpretation of the findings:**

- (i) Out of forty families there were only ten families where the male head, i. e.; father had some elementary education. Most of the parents were unlettered and engaged in agriculture or unskilled labour. Thus, it is clear that the children of these families had not been exposed to a socially healthy and amenable

atmosphere where they would have been provided with facilities like education, health care, and above all a warm under-the-ceiling culture. As for the occupation of male heads, they were engaged in agriculture, skilled and semi-skilled labour. None of the ladies among the 40 families, had any formal education except religious education like the offering of *Nimaz* or reciting the holy *Quran* which they had learnt by rote.

- (ii) Reviewing the literacy and formal education among the children, there were 126 children from both sexes, in the age range of six to fourteen years. Of these only 21 boys were attending school but not with regularity. And among those boys who did attend schools from primary classes through higher class did not have a smooth academic record as regards their scholastic achievement. Most of the boys were reported to have repeated same class and the general impression of teachers about the Khokha children was equally dismaying. Despite the facilities provided by the Government for the encouragement of the Khokha children their academic performance is far below that of an average student. As reported by the teachers the government provides uniform and a little financial assistance to the Khokha children but even then they do not stay long in the schools, and among those who continue, their performance is disheartening. No boy or girl was attending any higher secondary school situated in Boniyar. Most of the children were either loitering or tending herds of cattle or sheep. It has been already mentioned that the percentage of girls attending school at various grade levels, upto 9th standard, was practically insignificant.
- (iii) As for the dwelling conditions and the belongings of the Khokhas and Bombas, it was observed that most



of the 40 families were living in hutments known as 'Kothas', only 11 families had built up small houses which were in between the old hutments and the modern single-storey huts. Again it is shocking to note that the belongings of the occupants of these houses were meagre and predated. Their kitchenware, bedding, and the household goods were just nominal and outmoded. Very few families had access to the Television and Radio. Mostly the source of entertainment for these families are local folk songs and a cheap transistor.

- (iv) While observing the young adults (both male and female) it was found that the boys have taken to the modern style of dress and growing long and loose hair whereas the girls were seen dressed in their conventional form. Both boys and girls were seen working together in the fields or attending to their family chores.

To sum up the inferences, it is observed that the Khokhas continue to live like tribals whose source of income is confined to cattle rearing and casual labour. They have not benefited from the developmental programmes sponsored by the Government through various agencies. Their mode of living, cultivation of land and cattle rearing is as primitive as their history of origin on the soil of Boniyar. On the basis of intensive interview, conducted by the investigator, it has been found that both the Khokhas and Bombas have not opted for improving their economy by taking loans from the Government agencies or any other source. They have not considered to elevate the lot of their future progeny by sending their children to schools which are located very much in their vicinity. Ladies continued to be home-bound creatures, and are engaged in family chores and agricultural assistance rendered to their male folk.



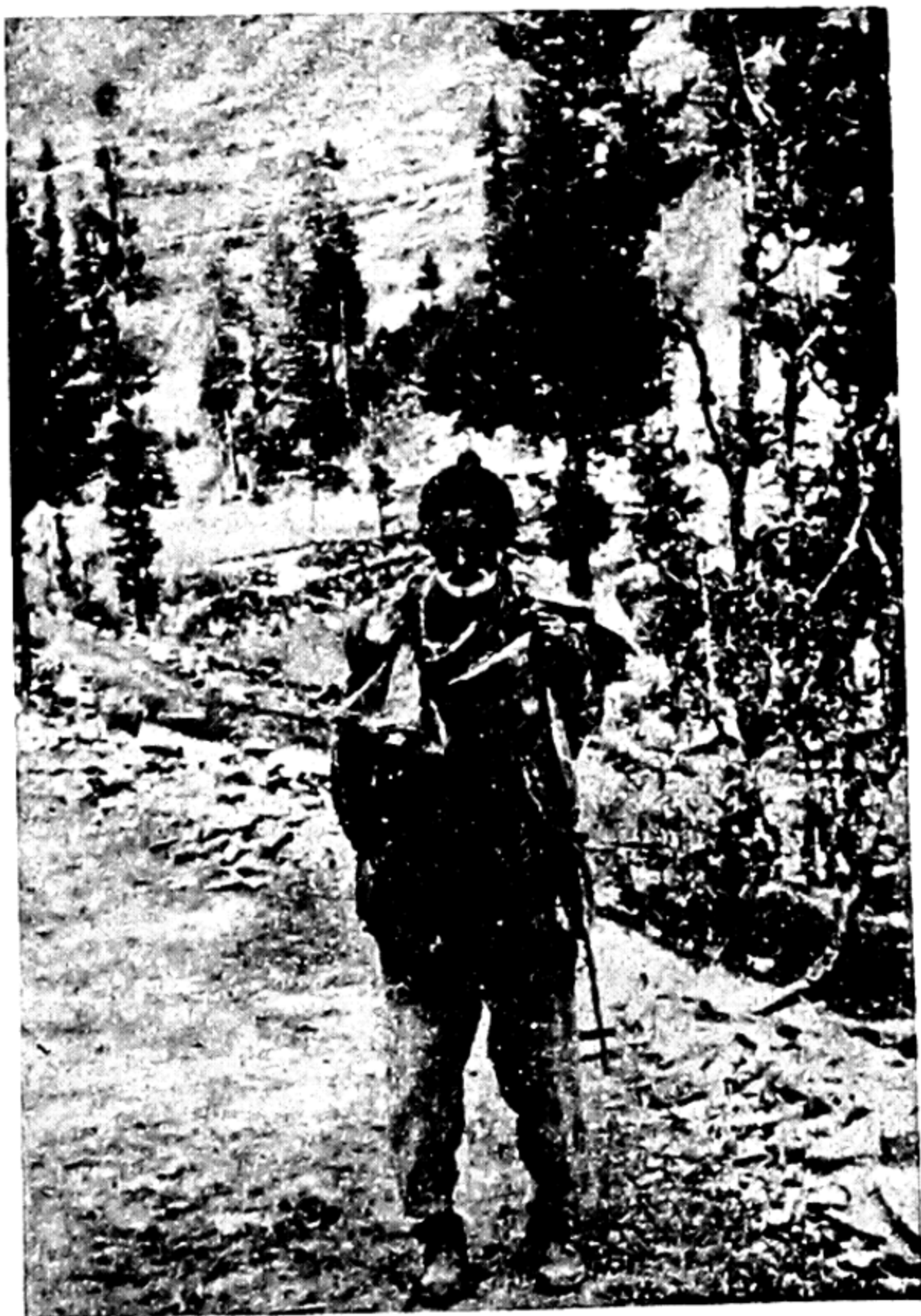


Plate III—  
Khokha Tribal from Boniyar



As for health and hygiene, Boniyar has a medium type of Allopathic dispensary with the available services of qualified doctors and technicians. But the two tribals, i. e; the Bombas and Khokhas do not seem to benefit from such facilities. They still hold on to conventional treatment based on herbal medicine.

Lastly, it needs mention that some of the Khokhas as reported by Fauq (1934), are settled in Zachaldara, Machael in the District Kupwara. These tribals are comparatively well-to-do in their social and economic status. This is due to the fact, that these tribals still have some small land holdings which sustain their survival, living standard, and economic as well as social prosperity.

### **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The intensive survey of the Khokha and Bomba families revealed that the Government and the Social Welfare agencies can do a lot for the upliftment of these tribals. And in this regard some recommendations were considered which have been listed as under.

- (i) In view of the historical background of the Khokha and Bomba tribals, it is established that they represent a martial race. Therefore, the youngmen of this community should have been attracted towards defence and other active services.
- (ii) There should have been a special commission for backward communities, like the Khokha and Bomba, which could ensure the utilization of grants and funds apportioned for their welfare.
- (iii) It has also been found that the Khokha and Bomba children do not attend schools regularly which means that publicity centres and mass-media machinery should

make special efforts in educating the Khokha and Bomba parents for the formal education of their children.

- (iv) The Khokha and Bomba tribals have not taken to the new schemes for their economic and agricultural development. The government should augment efforts in giving wide publicity to the loan and other schemes, which have been made available for the backward communities of the valley.
- (v) Special attempt should be made for the formal education of the Khokha and Bomba girls. Besides, publicity machinery should take care of organising such programmes. It will help towards the social emancipation of the women folk of the Khokha and Bomba tribals.
- (vi) The Department of Adult and Continuing Education under the Ministry of Human Resources Development should, in collaboration with the local Adult Education Centre, envisage capsule programmes for child care, housekeeping and social and economic welfare schemes for the benefit of the Khokha and Bomba families.

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## **Part IV**

*Kuli Faqirs*  
*The Gypsy Tribals*



# KULI FAQIRS

## The Gypsy Tribals

During the reign of Sahadeva, the last Hindu king of Kashmir, the valley was in a political turmoil and the aspirant Muslim rulers were making inlets by fits and starts into the political scene of the valley. Sahadeva's Prime Minister, Ramacandra was the actual ruler of the valley during (1318-38 AD). While Ramacandra was consolidating his political power, a Tibetan fugitive Rinchin came to the court of Ramacandra and sought political asylum. In the midst of fusion and political turmoil a Muslim adventurer, Shah Mir, who had been haunted by the dream of becoming the ruler of Kashmir also sought political protection from the Hindu Prime Minister Ramacandra. It needs mention, that Rinchin had fled from Tibet and Shah Mir had come from Swat, a small province in North West Frontier. Rinchin, by virtue of his cunning and administrative knack was able to dethrone Ramacandra and marry his daughter, Kota. Finally, Rinchin who was a Buddhist by faith embraced Islam, because of the influence of Shah Mir and his followers. By and by Shah Mir emerged as a powerful administrator and after the death of Rinchin, Shah Mir raised an open revolt against Kota Rani and finally after the death of Udyana deva, he became the ruler of the valley in 1341 A. D., under the title of Sultan Shams-ud-Din (Bamzai 1962).

It is stated that Shah Mir had collected, a large number of tribals with him, who joined his administration in different positions.

There is a lot of controversy regarding the title of *Shah* and historians are divided on the basic concept of Shah. It is stated that basically the word has come from present-day Iran where the Shah was the title of a

ruler or a king. With the passage of time, the word 'Shah' used to be attributed to spiritual priests and luminaries. However, there is no confusion regarding the history and concept of two words viz ; *Syed* and *Mir*, among Muslims. Basically, the word 'Syed' has been associated with the dynasty of *Holy Prophet* and it is stated, that the direct descendants of this dynasty are known as syeds (or Saadats) and from syeds, some people have adopted *Shah* as their title and continue to be known as *Syeds* under the Sub-title of '*Shah*'. Similarly, *Mir* is again a derivative of Arabic word '*Amir*' which refers to economic prosperity and exalted social and religious status.

### History and Background of Kuli Faqirs

The name 'Kuli faqir' as given to this gypsy community bears a number of explanations.. However, there are no two opinions regarding the origin and background of this community which is known as Kuli faqir and is predominantly settled in the outskirts of Baramulla. It is stated, that this gypsy community has its origin in *Swat* which is in present day Pakistan. As per the legends, it is stated that Kuli faqirs belong to Shah caste and used to be seasonal migrants from North West Frontier to the Valley of Kashmir. But in reality the Kuli faqirs have never been the descendants of Shah dynasty. The title Shah as assumed by this community is only the common practice of elevating one's status in the community. Since these people were nomads, they would fan out into the valley and sustain themselves by begging and posing as Faqirs and faith healers. Although it is not possible to establish the exact date of settlement of this gypsy community Kuli faqirs, yet there are hearsay beliefs and convictions that 'Kuli faqirs' were basically Rajputs and after migration to Kashmir they accepted Islam during the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin. On the basis of intensive survey and interview



with 250 families of this community the present investigator has come to the conclusion that the Kuli faqirs, who are presently settled in Janbaspora, Nadihal, and Binnier (All in the outskirts of Baramulla), have been visiting the valley like other tribals i. e. Khokhas, Bombas, and Gojars. With the passage of time, Kyli faqirs carved a niche for themselves in some of the pockets of Muslim community. The manner and the tactics with which the Kuli faqirs managed to have themselves owned by the local Muslims, is based on self-styled *Darvesh* a title assumed by the faith healers among the Muslims. These Kuli faqirs used to visit almost all parts of the valley and impress on the local Muslims that they are the religious priests and can pray for the betterment of their admirers. Since they had not any settled life, they used to camp in small groups, either in the mosques or in the open under the shady trees. As human nature is, the local Muslims, particularly the peasantry and the illiterates would believe in the sermons and magical feats of the Kuli faqirs. Even the remedial measures for evading evil spirits or having the blessings of God Almighty, the Kuli faqirs would issue amulets and some sacred presents in the form of ashes of burnt incense known as *tabaruk*.

Tracing the history and background of the present day Kuli faqirs, the investigator has not come through any standard reference. The hearsay beliefs reveal that this community belongs to Baba-Ali-Rehamatullah, who settled at Chinari Baramulla after having accepted the Islamic faith. It is also reported (Personal interview with the author) that the Kuli faqirs came under the stewardship of Jagir-Shah, and entered into the valley of Kashmir from Northern side, the present day (Chanpora) Tetwal. This clan settled at different places on their way to valley proper and now it is reported that the successors of this tribal community made their camping places at Shah nagri, Drugmulla in

district Kupwara, Dangi-wacha and, Narpora Sopore. The second batch of the Kuli faqirs, who came via Muzaffarabad was under the headship of Jaml Shah ; who was succeeded by his two sons Qadir Shah and Himat Shah. The progeny of this clan is settled in Nadihal (District Baramulla). After their settlement in the valley of Kashmir, they adopted a host of means for their survival. At the apex is that group of Kuli faqirs, who practised the trade of faith healers and charlatons, the second group of these Kuli faqirs has taken to taming of animals like monkeys and bears with whose feats they impress the peasantry and the local people and in return collect cash and seasonal crops as a token of *bakhshish*. The former section of Kuli faqirs, who consider themselves the religious saints do not associate themselves with the latter group. According to Kuli faqirs the name Kuli faqir is a nickname associated with this community because they used to live under trees. Another version that has been presented by persian scholars is based on the fact that the word Kuli faqir has been derived from gypsy style of this community. It is said wherever Kuli faqirs used to go, they would carry a load of their belongings on their backs and that is why they are known as Kuli faqirs. One more interpretation, which has also come from persian scholars explains that this gypsy community was spread all over the ancient persia which includes Kabul and the present-day Pakistan and therefore, they were known as Kuli faqirs which means the faqirs who were spread in all parts of the then Persia. But there is no objective credence or even any remote authenticity in the last two versions stated above. And the consensus supports that Kuli faqir is a nickname by which the community of Kuli faqir is known as they lived and camped under trees. Tree in Kashmiri means *Kul*.

## Physiognomy

The Kuli faqirs, who are essentially immigrants from North West Frontier, trace their genetic roots from the present day Iranians and Afghans. On the basis of their outward personality, they are tall, sturdy, slender and fair complexioned. This type of physiognomy differentiates the Kuli faqirs from the local Muslim population. Although they are settled in the villages, for the past three to four centuries, yet they have strictly maintained purity of their race. Intermarriages with the local Muslims are strictly discouraged. While collecting the information from elderly adults the investigator observed that the Kuli faqirs may welcome a matrimonial alliance for their male children from any local Muslim but they will never like to get their daughters married outside their own community. On the basis of comparison between male and female folk it is surprising to note that the ladies are not so tall, fair, and sturdy as the men folk. Further the Kuli faqirs have maintained the distinction between the names common among the local Muslims. The common name among the men are like, Himat Shah, Izat Shah and the names given to women of Kuli faqirs are, Zufran, Mitune and Azmi.

## Religion

The Kuli faqirs in the valley are the followers of Islam although on the basis of reports they were Rajputs before their first migration into the valley of Kashmir. The men, among this community, after a certain stage of adulthood grow beard in accordance with the Islamic law. Similarly, other religious customs like circumcision among male children, observance of fasts during the month of *Ramazan* and celebration of the religious festivals are strictly adhered to.

## Rituals

Despite their strict belief in *Islam*, Kuli faqirs have superstitious ideas prevalent among the local Hindus (Kashmiri Pandits). These include the chirping of a nightingale as a good omen and cawing of a crow as an ill omen. Similarly a woman with child is not supposed to stitch or chop wood at the time of lunar or solar eclipse. The Kuli faqirs also believe that if a woman crosses one's path from the right side, it is an ill omen. Similarly, at child birth members of this community tie black threads and amulets round the wrists and the neck of a neonate. Even the use of sacred beads among fondlings is very common in their culture.

## Marriage

Early marriage is still common in the community of Kuli faqirs, although, lately the boys of this community who have started attending schools, resist marrying at an early age. However, as a matter of practice, both boys and girls are married around the age of 16 to 20 years. The investigator observed some instances where an interviewee (Mr. Habibullah, a teacher) was married at the age of 11 years, when he was only a student of 5th class. It is reported that his wife was senior to him which is not a usual custom. Marriage is solemnised in accordance with the Islamic law and dowry is not in practice nor is it encouraged by the parents. Marriages are performed within the community and mostly among the known relations. It merits appreciation that out of 250 families settled in Janbaspora, Nadihal, and Binnier, there was not a single case of divorce or desertion. When the investigator enquired about the strict observance of marital relations, the subjects (males only) reported that since their's was a small community, individuals who opted for divorce were looked down upon and castigated.



Attitude towards family planning among the Kuli faqirs is the same as the attitude of any common Muslim. Among the total population of 250 families, only 3 families were there where a woman had gone in for tubectomy. However, no male member had gone for vasectomy. On investigation, the attitude towards family planning, revealed that the husband would suggest to his wife to opt for tubectomy so that her health would not be affected in any way. But on the basis of personal inference and observation, the investigator concludes that male chauvinism runs still among the middle and lower middle class communities, where a woman exists only as a dependent creature on the male head. Men avoid family planning operations for a variety of psychological and hearsay beliefs. And the main apprehension among the males is lest they should get physically involved in any sort of sickness; whereas they overlook such possibilities for their female counterparts. Keeping in view, the negative attitude for family planning, which is compounded with early marriage, the Kuli faqir families have a large number of children. On an average a couple within the reproductive age group bears 6 to 8 children.

### **Child rearing practices**

Child rearing practices among Kuli faqirs are just conventional. A girl after marriage bears her first child when she is hardly around 17-18 years. No special care during pregnancy is taken by a pregnant woman. Illiteracy and superstitious beliefs predominate in the care and physical movement of such women. She is not under the supervision of the gynecologist, let alone the extra medical care like, increase in the calories of diet through tonics and energy giving medicines. Delivery is also a conventional matter, the pregnant woman is not admitted to hospital. It is only within the family, and with the assistance of a mid-wife, that a woman is delivered of the baby. Although



the chances of survival for the woman and the child are subject to all types of hazards. After delivery the mother gets bed-rest for some weeks and the neonate is taken care of by the senior siblings or a grandmother in a joint family system. Weaning and toilet training of children is also conventional. It is a matter of routine that children start taking cereals at any age after three months. Toilet training is not practised in strict adherence to rules and regulations. Again it is a matter of chance how the child becomes conscious when he moves outside the house in order to ease his bowels. Since the women are home bound, a new born baby gets enough care and affection from mother. In case the mother is engaged in household chores the older siblings look after the child. Male children, as compared to female children, receive more attention from parents, siblings and elders. This is again, because of the hope that the male member is the source of sustenance for the future family. Pre-cautionary medical treatment like treatment for polio, smallpox and tetanus is not very common in most of the Kuli faqir families. On the other hand, faith in superstitious practices for the welfare and future of the child is very common. For instance, a new born baby is taken to any nearest religious place where a wish is made: "O Lord! may the child survive, be happy and prosperous". In return the parents sacrifice an animal to propitiate the saints. Discipline in the family comes from the word of father. Mothers are generally affectionate and relaxed in discipline, whereas the father is strict and authoritarian. There are no strict injunctions for the mixing of boys and girls and at the same time mothers educate their daughters with regard to opposite sex. Boys have a special training for their role playing. They are strictly supposed to grow as future adults and bread winners of the family.

## Education

Although education in the valley of Kashmir has not made a pronounced impact (as for the literacy statistics), yet it needs mention that there are elementary schools for the boys and girls everywhere within the distance of one to two kilometres from the home place of a child. It is surprising that the Kuli faqirs have very insignificant literacy statistics. Girls are not being encouraged for any formal education and boys, who attend schools at various grade levels, do not show any encouraging promise as their family conditions are not conducive to a healthy educational atmosphere. Out of 250 families, interviewed by the investigator, it was observed that Janbaspora which is in the outskirts of Baramulla has a pronounced impact of urban competition and a good number of families have enrolled their male children in various schools. However, in Nadihal and Binnier, only a handful of boys have been attending schools upto 9th standard and some of the boys have given up formal schooling after the Matriculation. The educated boys in Janbaspora, Nadihal and Binnier were employed as technical workers in the departments of irrigation, flood control and veterinary. However, the two sons of master Habibullah Shah (a lone family) were enrolled in B. Sc. Agriculture. Although the Kuli faqir community has been declared as socially backward, yet their children have not been given any representation in any professional college like engineering and medicine. In Janbaspora alone, there were seven male graduates who were working as school teachers. Since Kuli faqirs claim themselves to be from a superior caste, they do not engage themselves in semi-skilled jobs like carpentry, smithy, agriculture or jobs which are associated with the lower castes among the Muslims.

## Culture and Dress

It has been mentioned earlier that the valley of Kashmir is like a salad bowl of various sub-cultures, and has

generated a composite culture which is secular and tolerant. The cultural heritage of the Kuli-faqirs is a mixed type which represents various types of rituals and customs, and are commonly found among the non-Muslims. As for the dress and its background, the Kuli faqirs again represent a mixed culture which is partly Persian and partly Kashmiri. This has been pointed out by some of the members who were interviewed by the investigator. The adult males wear a long and loose chola, which is like the Kashmiri *Pheran* worn by Sufi Muslims. This dress is an indication of saintliness in thought and character of the people who have addressed themselves to mysticism. Another special feature in the dress of Kuli faqirs is a white long sheet of cloth which hangs on their left shoulder. This is considered to be an essential part of the dress of Hindu as well as Muslim Sufis. This part of the dress is again a symbol of respectability. Besides, Kuli-faqirs wear a long shirt and Shalwar which is sometimes replaced by a 'Longhi', and is very common among this community whereas this part of dress is not common among the local Muslims. Besides the pattern of dress, the professional Kuli faqirs grow a long beard and flying hair on their head. This is again an attribute to saintliness, which the Kuli faqirs manifest presumptuously. As a matter of fact, all these characteristics in dress and manifest personality are associated with those saintly persons among Muslims and Hindus who have withdrawn themselves from worldly attachment and engage themselves in spiritual exercises. It is doubtful whether the Kuli faqirs live up to this maxim or only pretend in order to lure the teeming millions and extract all sorts of presents for themselves. Two more important paraphernalia in the dress of a Kuli faqir are a long stick beautifully carved in their right hand and a small bucket, made of brass, in their left hand. They also carry a long rosary which is made of wild seeds and this important spiritual component is used as a magical





Plate IV—

Kuli Faqir from Baramulla District





device. The investigator has personal experience that Kuli faqirs, while impressing their spiritual powers upon a subject, ask him to hold his hands open and to the surprise of the devotee, drops of water trickle from the rosary contained in the fist of Kuli faqir. One more revelation, which they often exhibit and demonstrate, is changing a bit of salt into sugar in its taste. There are some professional feats which they demonstrate and hypnotise the thinking and reasoning capability of a common man and even some times of an enlightened person as well.

### **Social Interaction**

It is an admitted fact that the people living in hilly areas, particularly the tribal communities, have always to go through adventures and challenges. Some times they face natural calamities due to which they are prone to hard life and struggle. Even during pre-independence era, when means of communication in the Valley of Kashmir were almost negligible, people used to travel on the pony tracks and the paths that were beaten with the footprints of the millions of travellers. The Kuli faqirs in Kashmir used to travel from one extreme of the valley to the other. On the basis of interview reports, the investigator observed that all those male members who are above 55 have travelled widely within the Valley and outside. These tribals have crossed, a number of times, the peaks of the Pir Panjal in order to cross over to Poonch, Kishtawar and Jammu. From the North Eastern side the Kuli faqirs have crossed the Zojila peaks in order to reach places like Ladakh and Kargil. Similarly, outside the Valley the Kuli faqirs under the mystic guise have widely surveyed the western belt of Frontier province. The places include Muzaffarabad, Kabul, Rawalpindi and Lahore. In this way, the Kuli faqirs have a rich and varied experience by meeting people, living under different social, economic and

cultural conditions. Though this age group, as mentioned above, of the Kuli faqirs is totally illiterate yet they have been able to communicate with the people having different dialects and religious persuasions. After the partition of the country, their adventures have taken them to new places like, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Bombay; besides, they visit the places in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Frontier districts of the present-day Pakistan. Keeping in view the rich exposure towards which the Kuli faqirs are drawn they have imbibed a very progressive attitude in their interpersonal and social relations. However, they have strict reservations about cultivating any relationship through marriage or adoption with any other sub-community of Muslims. It is not surprising that these Kuli faqirs with the help of their mystic feats have been able to win pecuniary favours from people of all shades and social classes. These include film stars, highly placed bureaucrats in the State and Central Government and the common man alike.

### **Dwellings and belongings**

As Kuli faqirs are not the natives of the valley, they have not been able to own even a stretch of land either for agricultural cultivation or for the purpose of dwellings. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that these people are living in some pockets of the valley in the midst of congestion. Some of the hutments, in which these people live are as old as 150 to 200 years. It has been mentioned earlier, that these Kuli faqirs used to live in small tents pitched in open fields and under shady trees. There is hardly any improvement in the dwelling conditions of these people, except that the temporary tent has been replaced with a mud-plastered dingy hutment with a small roof over it. Because of the versatile clientele known in Kashmiri as *Mureeds*, the belongings of the Kuli faqirs range from

ordinary electric tea kettle to the most sophisticated gadgets from Japan and other places of the world. These gadgets include electronic watches, tape-recorders, T. V. sets and a variety of dress material, which is particularly used by the younger generation.

### Language

The language of tribals in the Valley of Kashmir is one of the important source that helps in tracing their roots. It is equally true about the Gojars, Khokhas/Bombas and the Kuli faqirs. Kuli faqirs, as mentioned earlier, were originally the tribals living in the North West Frontier provinces and more particularly in the district of Hazara, Swat and Queta, which comprise the parts of old Iranian territory. Taking clues from such records the historians are convinced, on the issue that the language of the Kuli faqirs is a mixed one which includes Persian, Pashtu and Pahari. Reviewing the data collected by the present investigator, it has been found that Kuli faqirs are living in the valley for the past 400 years and by now they have adopted the local language and the Kashmiri dialect. However, within their own community, they still use some Persian words which are not commonly in use in the Kashmiri language. For instance, they use word *Lham* for mutton, and *Regi* for boiled rice and *Dhast* for hand. Similarly, there are other words, which are either in Persian or Pashtu and are being used by these people along with the Kashmiri language. It is unfortunate that no written records, in any form of this community are traceable. Even in the monumental work of Lawrence (1967), Sufi (1974) and Fauq (1934), there is no mention about this tribal community of Kuli faqirs.

### Old age and death

The Kuli faqirs, because of their robust personality, and challenging adventures live a long life. The average

age of the people, ranges between 55–85. It is surprising to note, as shown in plante No. V, that these old people live a healthy life with all the teeth intact, and are able to move and care for themselves. With the coming up of new generation the nucleus family is gradually receding and small families are coming up. Elderly people above the age of 65 have retired from active life and have given themselves to austerity and renunciation from active family life. These elderly people are being taken care of by their grown up children and other family members. It needs mention, that the younger generation seems to be respectfully committed towards the welfare of these elderly people and the problems related to old age, are not seen in the general health conditions of the elderly people. It was observed that they have not become the victims of old age ailments like heart trouble, blood-pressure or problems related to digestion. With the passage of time, the younger generation among the Kuli faqirs, has shifted from herbal treatment to modern allopathic medicines.

#### **Main problems which merit consideration**

Like any other backward community, the Kuli faqirs of the Valley are miserably under the pressure of economic poverty, social backwardness and large scale illiteracy. The ladies of this community have yet to open their score in the field of teaching and learning, although an insignificant number of girls are attending elementary schools. Again, this community has not benefited from the highly publicized 20 point programme for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society. Out of 250 families of the Kuli faqirs settled at Janbaspora, Nadihal and Binnier (in Baramulla) only four families had benefited from bank loans.

#### **Recommendations and Suggestion**

1. On the basis of priority, the Government at local and central level must take the cognizance of the enormity



of economic, social and the ethnic problems of this community. And in this regard efforts should be augmented for (1.) opening of schools for boys and girls within the habitat pockets of Kuli faqirs. The parents and children need to be educated and motivated for sending their children to formal schooling. For this purpose incentives like scholarships, uniforms, mid-day meals, and school as a community centre should be considered by the Government.

2. A major chunk of the Kuli faqirs, above the age of 45, are still unlettered and uneducated, their lot could be improved by bringing them under the yoke of adult and continuing education
3. Special programmes meant for women could be introduced particularly in areas like housekeeping, hygiene, child care, food and nutrition.
4. Under the women's welfare programme, the Government could also consider arranging of field publicity programmes which throw light on child care, improvement in household, contribution of women towards social and economic progress of the family.
5. There should be reservation of seats for children of the Kuli faqirs for their admission to technical and professional colleges. Similarly, preference should be given in the market of employment to the educated Kuli faqir children as compared to other socially well-placed communities.
6. It may not be out of place to mention that the longevity of life among the Kuli faqirs is greater as compared to other sections of the community. Therefore, old age pension for the men and women of this community would go a long way towards elevating the living conditions of the elderly members of this community.



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## An Over View

It is widely accepted that the quality of life of a nation is reflected through the care it takes of the children and the elderly people. While reviewing this maxim in the Indian context it may not be out of way to mention that the Central Government has seriously contemplated the educational problems of women and weaker sections of our society. Although a commendable progress has been achieved in literacy and in the prevention of early childhood diseases, yet there is no denying the fact that a multitude of our children, coming from backward sections and backward communities, are still staying away from schools. Similarly, there is no let-up in the infantile deaths which are reported to be 113 per thousand in the rural and 66 in the urban population. On the one hand, the mortality rate of the children has been controlled, and, on the other, the explosion of population has attained enormous proportions. It is, therefore, obvious that the present day educational facilities at the primary level in the rural habitats of the country, are not sufficient. In the new educational policy, the Government of India has accepted its failures in implementing the constitutional proviso of making education free and compulsory for all children upto the age of 14 years, and it has been resolved that before the dawn of the 21st century the country will achieve the target of free and compulsory education at the primary level. However, it is highly debatable whether these claims will meet an appreciable success or get ditched into miserable failure.

The reservations expressed by the public and the Parliament on the feasibility of the "New Education Policy", are genuine, and merit an analytical approach rather than

the holding of diluted views fraught with sectarian, regional and political overtones. The fact is that we have not achieved our constitutional provision of free and compulsory education for all children upto 14 years of age, even though four decades have passed and the recommendations of various education commissions have, by and large, remained confined to the sacred volumes which are accumulating dust in the archives of libraries. However, we are optimistic that the new policy in education will not sink in the gutter of bureaucratic indignation and red tape, as the Government has shown earnest concern to alleviate the miseries of the teeming millions by bringing the fruits of education to their door-steps, and by doing so the benefits of science and technology may reach those who struggle between hope and despair.

Therefore, the Government should adopt effective and result-oriented measures so that the objectives of the compulsory elementary education and adult education programmes, are achieved within the deadline period. Both these programmes form the bed-rock of our future India and, for this, the Government must seek an active cooperation of the press, the public, the welfare agencies and the teaching fraternity from the school to the University level. In executing the *Black-board* operation, result oriented programmes should be formulated and should be backed by effective follow-up programmes. The available resources like retired teachers and the unemployed educated youth should be engaged to fight illiteracy on a war footing in the rural areas and among the weaker sections of society.

Reviewing the statistical inferences of children's education of fishermen families, Gojars, Khokhas-Bombas and the Kuli-faqirs, it is observed that the children's act of (1974) has not made any impact on the education and child care of these communities. Since these research

studies in the present form are being released when the country has already accepted the challenges of education, it is hoped that the Government public and the Welfare agencies will effectively deal with the early child care and education and use integrated child development system effectively in rural India and among the backward sections of the country. According to the Planning Commission report the estimated population of children in 6-11 age group is supposed to be 9.61 crores during 1989. Therefore, in keeping with the commitment the Central and the State Government must strive to yoke all children towards elementary and primary education. The inflated statistics of enrolment is only a rosy picture. The Government must see that the children of backward communities who are admitted to primary classes continue till they complete the age of 14 years. Whereas it is reported that the drop-out rate of children from 6-11 years is 60% and from 6-14 years it is 75%. In this way the investment on education of the backward communities has not been fruitful in the light of available statistics of literacy and education of these communities. In the same way, the investment on the education of girls, from the backward communities is not only disquieting but statistically insignificant.





## APPENDIX I

### Child Rearing Practices of Canal Boat Families : Their Psycho - Social and Cultural Development.

#### General Information :

- i) Name.....
  - ii) S. O./D. O./W. O. : .....
  - iii) Age : .....
  - iv) Residence : .....,.....

	M.	F.
--	----	----
  - v) Age at the time of marriage :
  - vi) How many living children have you ?

M-age.	F-age.
--------	--------
  - vii) What is the total number of children delivered so far ?

Alive	Dead
M - F	M - F
  - viii) What was your age at the time of your first delivery ? .....
- F. 1 Does your husband/wife respect you as you desire to be respected as a life partner?  
Yes/Not at all/Mixed attitude.
- H. 2 Was your first delivery in a hospital ? .....
- So. 3 Do you think that your social relations are strained because of your spouse ?  
Yes/Not exactly/Some times.
- Ec. 4 What is the total average income you make in a day ? .....
- E. 5 Do you think that your spouse generally remains tense ?  
Yes/Not at all/At times.
- R. 6 Do you provide some ethical/moral/religious education to your children ?  
Yes/No.

P. 7 Why are you given to smoking and use of snuff?  
.....

H. 8 How often have you delivered in a hospital? .....  
.....

F. 9 Do you think that your house is a battle-ground  
because of strained husband-wife relations?

Yes/Not exactly so/Some times.

So. 10 How do you feel about the children who are  
neglected because of divorce or re-marriage of  
their parents?.....

Ec. 11 Have you taken loans for improving your family  
condition?

Yes/No.

E. 12 Do you think that your emotional attitude as hus-  
band/wife towards your spouse is?

Normal/Strained/So. So.

R. 13 What ethical or moral education do you provide  
to your children? .....

P. 14 Which programmes do you enjoy as the favourite  
ones? .....

H. 15 Do you think that the conventional mid-wives  
are experienced in helping a pregnant woman to  
deliver?

Yes/No/I can't say.

F. 16 Have you ever thought that your family unhappi-  
ness is due to emotional parading of your spouse?

Not often/Not at all/Some times.

So. 17 Do you avail of educational facilities for your  
children?

Yes/No.

Ec. 18 Have you taken loans for improving your family  
conditions?

Yes/No.

E. 19 Do you think that the cruel behaviour of your  
spouse has shattered your peace of mind? .....

- R. 20 As follower of Islam, why don't you use the Pardha? .....
- P. 21 Do you enjoy a movie?  
Yes/No.
- E. 22 Do you think that conventional mid-wives are better experienced than hospital nurses?  
Yes/No/Some times.
- F. 23 Do you think that your neighbours have a better husband/wife relationship than you have?  
Yes/I don't know/No.
- So. 24 How do your children react to obscene language which you use in the family? .....
- Ec. 25 Why don't you establish co-operative system for marketting fish? .....
- P. 26 What are your reactions to radio, television programmes and movies? .....
- H. 27 Have you undergone any surgery because of child bearing?  
Yes/No.
- F. 28 Do you think that your personal life would have been healthy and comfortable if you were married to some one else?  
Yes/No/Can't say
- So. 29 Do you like that your children should have formal education? .....
- Ec. 30 What new techniques have you adopted to improve your profession? .....
- H. 31 How do you maintain your health during pregnancy? .....
- F. 32 Have you ever thought of seeking a divorce from your husband/wife because of the unpleasant attitude of husband/wife?  
Yes, I am seriously thinking/No, not at all/We are just dragging on.
- So. 33 What suggestions do you offer for educating your children in a better way? .....

H. 34 After delivery do you take any special care of your health ?

Yes/No.

F. 35 Are you happy with your spouse ?

Yes/No/So. So.

So. 36 Do you appreciate marriage by agreement as compared to arranged marriages ? .....

H. 37 What medical facilities do you avail after delivery ? .....

F. 38 What is your reaction towards divorce ? .....

So. 39 Do you feel that your language and behaviour is indecent ? .....

H. 40 How do you arrange circumcision of your male children ? .....

F. 41 What arrangements do you have for rearing your children ? .....

So. 42 Do you prefer the joint family system to small family ? .....

F. 43 Do you maltreat your children because of your broken home atmosphere ?

Yes/No/Some times.

H. 44 Usually what type of medicines do you use during illness ? .....

F. 45 Do you think that your children are having an unpleasant family atmosphere because of tense relations between you and your spouse ?

It is so/No/Can't say

So. 46 Why do you make your husband to behave as a passive member of the family ? .....

H. 47 What are the common diseases which your children contaminate during infancy ? .....

So. 48 Why there has not been any change in the style of your dress since independence ? ... ..

F. 49 How many hours, a day, do you spend with your children ?.....

- So. 50 What is your opinion about the education of girls of your community ? .....
- F. 51 Do you believe in scolding your children ?  
Yes/No.
- So. 52 How do you react to co-education ? .....
- So. 53 Do you take any off-day for recreation or change ?  
.....
- So. 54 Have you a radio or a television set at home ?  
Yes/No.
- So. 55 Have you ever gone for a tour ?  
Yes/No.
- So. 56 Do you caste your vote while electing members for the assembly or parliament ?  
Yes/No.
- So. 57 What is your reaction towards people in general ?  
.....
- So. 58 What is your personal opinion, as to how society rates you in view of your :  
a) Profession.....  
b) Status. ....  
c) Sub-caste.....
- So. 59 What modern facilities have been provided to you by the Government ? .....
- So. 60 Which games do you play, in-doors and out-doors  
.....
- G. 61 What suggestions would you offer for :  
a) Welfare of your children.....  
b) Maintaining their health.....  
c) Improving the present  
conditions of your profession.....





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